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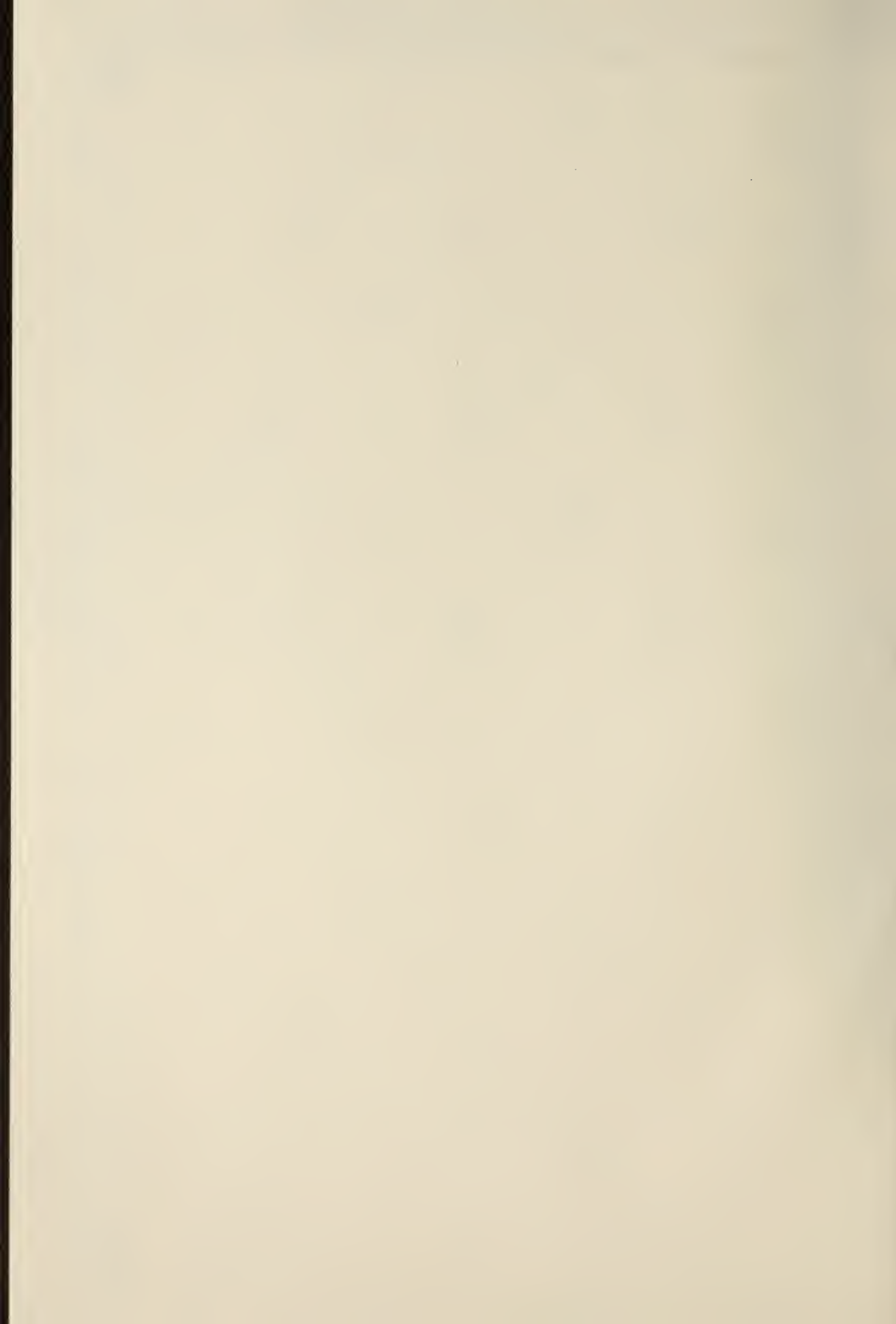
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New Movies, etc.

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. VI, No. 1



January, 1931



Street Scene from "The Blue Angel" (see page 9)

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CONFERENCE NUMBER

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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Vol. VI, Number 1.

January, 1931

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A Pioneer in Practical Film Usage ³⁷

Our "Who's Who" presenting to our readers the members of the National Board of Review introduces this month Mr. George J. Zehrung, Director of the Motion Picture Bureau of the Y.M.C.A., a member of the Executive Committee.

NEARLY thirty years ago I witnessed my first movie. Calcium light was the luminant. The feed reel was suspended in the open above the head of the projector. The film, after passing through, dropped in loose coils into a huge wicker basket.

The exhibition was held in a lodge room, and the audience made its entrance up a long flight of stairs, through a small anteroom into the main room.

When I think of what might have happened in case of a film fire, I am convinced that Fate was extremely kind to the people of that small village.

The pictures were of farm machinery. We watched with amazement the harvesting of wheat in the great western plains with a new type of reaper called a "Header" pulled by twelve or more horses.

Thomas A. Edison is said to have made a statement that motion pictures would go one of two ways, for education or for entertainment. He prophesied the first.

The intensive interest given to motion pictures as a visual aid in educational processes during the past few years indicates that Mr. Edison's prophesy may yet be realized.

Eighteen years ago I had my first experience with motion pictures as a visual aid. One of my boys had been given a projector head, which had been discarded by a nearby theater, and he had



George J. Zehrung

constructed his own carbon lamp house and magazines.

We used this machine after school hours. Subjects concerning metals, wood, leather, paper, etc., were obtained through the aid of the motion picture operator of the theater.

Our experiment was of short duration as the supply of films was soon exhausted, but it left no doubt in my mind concerning the value of motion pictures. The boys grasped and retained the information to a remarkable degree.

Many Y. M. C. A. secretaries assigned to war industries in the early days of the world war, were promoting programs of mutual helpfulness to employer and employed. Up to this time many of these men had used industrial and commercial entertainment films. Later they sought to relate them to the immediate problem of labor stabilization and maximum production. The movie must do more than entertain; it must work.

As an illustration of how this was accomplished, let us look in upon a group of foreign born workers in a textile mill in New England. More than two hundred men of nine different nationalities were present. The Sunday afternoon meeting was part of the "Y" Americanization program.

A motion picture was being used to teach English to these foreign born men.

The film was a Tennessee melodrama with the mountain moonshiner, his beautiful daughter, and her lover, a government revenue officer.

The Americanization secretary stood by the screen and with a pointer proceeded to teach.

Let us now turn from the upturned expectant faces to the screen.

We see the exterior of a mountain cabin, ears of corn in the husks hanging in strings against the wall, the wash bench with basin, home-made soap, a water pail and gourd dipper. A long barrel squirrel rifle leans against the log wall.

The slab door slowly opens, and the

face of the moonshiner is seen peering cautiously about. His hand stealthily grasps the gun, which he quickly brings to his shoulder and fires.

The scene changes and we see the officer stagger and sink into the bushes. Then the daughter rushes past her father, through briar and brush to the side of the officer. Quickly she tears a strip of cloth from her apron, and proceeds to staunch the flow of blood and bandage the wound.

Now let us see what the man with the pointer has been doing.

In simple phrasing and synchronized with the action, he says, "The door opens. The man looks out. He sees the officer. He takes the gun. He shoots the officer. He breaks the law. The daughter loves the officer. She runs to him. She stops the blood. She bandages the wound."

At the close of the picture an animated discussion takes place.

Interpreters aid these men in determining the kind of a man they want living next door to them, and the kind of men they should be.

Many successful experiments have convinced us that it is not so much a matter of content, as it is appropriate application.

The teacher who has the patience and ingenuity to discover a cubic content problem in a train of coal cars, or to find the practical application of a laboratory experiment in hydraulics in a coal mining film, will inject new interest in otherwise dull subjects.

The clergyman who can find a parable in the film story of an orange and convey a practical application of Christ's precepts will give his congregation new spiritual interpretation and information.

Application must be made with a deliberate goal, careful preparation, and from wise selections.

It is encouraging to find constantly increasing numbers of religious, educa-

(Continued on page 8)

Our Annual Conclave

THE Sixteenth Annual Luncheon of the National Board of Review will be held Saturday, January 24th in the Hotel Pennsylvania, New York City. This luncheon will be the final event of a three day Conference which brings together people from many parts of the country interested in the study of the motion picture and the support of the better films in the community.

The subject of the Seventh Annual Conference is "The Community Plan of Motion Picture Support and Interest." The Conference opens on Thursday morning, January 22nd, with a Review Committee meeting of the Board in order to acquaint the delegates with the Committee procedure in reviewing pictures. This meeting will be held at the new Fox Private Theatre.

The topic is to be divided into sub-divisions for discussion at various sessions. These sub-topics are "The Community and the Motion Picture in the Theatre," "Cultural Uses of the Unusual Film by the Community," "The Community and the Motion Picture for Children," "The Community and the Motion Picture in Visual Education."

The speakers presenting different phases of the subject are: Mr. Albert Howson, Scenario Editor of Warner Bros.; Mr. Arthur E. Krows, Director, Electrical Research Products Corp. of the Western Electric Company and author of "The Talkies"; Mrs. Alonzo Richardson, Secretary, Atlanta (Ga.) Better Films Committee; Mr. Montague Salmon, Managing Director, Fox State Theatre, Jersey City, N. J.; Mr. Ashley Miller, Director, Children's Theatre, Heckscher Foundation; Dr. William Martin Richards, Better Vision Institute; Mr. A. G. Balcom, Director of Visual Education, Newark, N. J., Schools.

There will be two evening events of unusual interest. One a showing in the Chanin Little Theatre on the fiftieth floor of the Chanin Building Thursday night of the picture *Rango* made in Sumatra by Er-

nest Schoedsack, co-producer of *Grass* and *Chang*. Miss Iris Barry, noted English motion picture critic and author of "Let's Go to the Movies" will be guest speaker. Friday night will be "Museum Night" for the Conference delegates will at that time be guests of the American Museum of Natural History. They will be greeted following a dinner in the "Flying Bird Hall" by Dr. George H. Sherwood, Curator-in-Chief of the Museum. A specially conducted tour of the Vernay Faunthorpe Hall and the projected Akeley African Hall has been arranged preceding a showing of films in the Museum auditorium.

The speakers and guests of honor at the Luncheon on Saturday will be: Hon. William N. Doak, The Secretary, U. S. Department of Labor; D. W. Griffith, Director of *The Birth of a Nation* and many other notable films; Walter Wanger, Production Executive, Paramount Famous Lasky Corporation; Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance, star of the Indian film, *The Silent Enemy*; Peter J. Brady, President of the Federation Bank and Trust Company; Russell Owen, newspaper correspondent of the Byrd Expedition; Bernt Balchen, pilot of the Byrd Expedition; Dorothy Arzner, Director of *Sarah and Son* and *Anybody's Woman*, only woman director in America; Ernst Lubitsch, Director of *Passion*, *The Marriage Circle*, *Peter the Great*, *Monte Carlo*; Edmund Goulding, Director of *The Devil's Holiday* and *Reaching for the Moon*.

Many prominent motion picture stars will also be there. Among them Maurice Chevalier, Claudette Colbert, Fredric March, Charles Ruggles, Helen Twelvetrees, Tallulah Bankhead, lately from England to appear in American films, and others.

We hope that many of our readers will be in attendance. However those who cannot will still have the benefit of learning what is said, as the various addresses delivered will be printed in forthcoming issues of this magazine.

The Hollywood Scene

By FRANCES TAYLOR PATTERSON

Instructor in Photoplay Composition, Columbia University

NO matter what preconceived ideas you may have as to what Hollywood is like, when you get to that famous Mecca of the Movies you are apt to find that it is quite otherwise. If, with the thought that Hollywood controls the world trade in films, you expect a large industrial city, you will find it quite pastoral. The Pathe Studio resembles an old Southern mansion, and the Fox Studio out at Westwood looks like an up-to-date country club. If, reckoning the population in terms of showfolk, you look for Broadway, you will find Main Street. The much talked of Beverly Boulevard might be Upper Mountain Avenue, Montclair, or it might be North Broadway, Tarrytown; it might in fact be any prosperous suburban residential street. If you expect it to be fast, you will find it is slow. If you expect fun, you will find plenty of hard work. The one constant among so many variables would seem to be the sun. You expect Hollywood to be sunny, and it is sunny. But even in this connection there is an element of surprise. Naturally with sun you expect shade. But there is no shade. Hollywood, which was once a lemon grove (and certain disgruntled individuals insist that it still is!) is fast becoming bare of trees. Palms and peppers and eucalyptus have gone down before the wholesale onslaught of asphalt paving. I remember once in the blazing light of noon crossing the street to get in the shade of a picket fence—in November. On the whole, however, if you go out with the idea that Hollywood is different from everywhere else in the world, you will find it is pretty much the same as most places, except that there are, perhaps, more gas stations and chain grocery stores. The trolleys, the buses, the

Woolworth's and the United Cigar stands are all standard make.

What I went out to find, frankly, was a revolution. I had heard it said that the art of the screen had been done to death; that pantomime was no more; that the movies had committed suicide. I found no corpses. Sound was supposed to have revolutionized the motion picture



Frances Taylor Patterson

industry, but so far as I could see, the coup d'etat had failed to come off. The movies seemed to be pretty much the same old movies. True, there were new terms in the studio patter; the director no longer yelled his orders through a megaphone, and the silence that prevailed on the sound set between the electric bells which announced a "take" was more

profound than that of the most disciplined class-room. But the fears, voiced in scare heads by the critics, that the movies would no longer move, that the invention of sound would chain the photoplay to the microphone, that the whole art of the screen would be forced into the narrow confines of the proscenium arch of the theater, were fast being dispelled. If it had seemed in the beginning of sound that the term going on location had been dropped from the moving picture vocabulary, the release of *Hallelujah*, with its broad canvases and its sweep of scenic progression, had proved otherwise. Companies were about to set out for the Painted Desert and even for the far territory of Trader Horn. Technical experts were working upon devices for straining sounds out of the air so that the sound recording could proceed satisfactorily out of doors instead of being "faked" within sound proof studios. When I first got there the microphones were "planted" on the set and the players didn't dare wander out of their immediate proximity. Before I left, some seven or eight months later, the microphones were swinging on flexible metal arms above the heads of the players. They followed the actor around the set. The cameras, too, were out of their sound proof booths, known locally as "dog kennels." The huge unwieldy things had been replaced by small platforms with pneumatic tires upon which the camera and its operator rode about as easily and quietly as if they were on a hospital carriage. It was the sound apparatus which was now safely housed against all noises.

That the element of movement should prevail in pictures rather than the element of sound was, of course, inevitable. Upon motion the fortunes of the movies were built; and that is to say they were built upon one of the most fundamental fascinations since the beginning of time. It is the principle back of gladiatorial combats, bull fighting, horse racing,

dancing. It was much too big a thing to scrap for the exigencies of sound. Furthermore, sound was not peculiar to the screen. Music, dialogue, the human voice, belonged also to the stage and to the radio. But breadth and scope and movement belonged to the screen alone. Producers would have been dull indeed to relinquish for long their chief advantage over other forms of entertainment. And the event has proved that in matters of showmanship producers are never dull.

Nor are they ever confounded by technical difficulties. They seem almost to invent new difficulties, as if they were putting fresh hazards in a golf game, in order to prove how easily they can be overcome. The longer I stayed in Hollywood the more impressed I was with the amount of mechanical genius there is on even the most unpretentious lot. The brains of the industry are by no means back of the expensive mahogany desks of the executives. They are everywhere on the set in blue jeans and jumpers and overalls and suspenders. In the glamor of the beautifully costumed principals and the impressive manner of the director, these less spectacular geniuses are apt to be overlooked. Without their work, however, both director and star would be reduced to a state of nothingness; upon them the whole continuity of filming depends. The work of the actors and directors is piecemeal. They do a little of what they are supposed to do and then stop. They seem to be in a constant state of suspended action. They sit around gossiping, modelling in clay or chewing gum, because the highly inflammable nature of celluloid makes it a misdemeanor, if not a felony, to light a cigarette. Their work, to all appearances, is just a succession of waits. To get an impression of the real continuity of the work you must watch the mechanicians. For them there are no waits. They keep on with their electric cables and their switches and their signal lights

and their "set" telephones. No mechanism is foolproof. They must repair, improve, invent. As I observed how the delicate recording instruments were in constant need of an alert mind to anticipate and interpret their requirements, I had no more fears that this machine age would make robots of us all. The whole marvelous subject of electricity, translated on the set in terms of light and sound, seemed to stimulate rather than to atrophy the minds of the workers.

A good deal of invention and creative energy goes also into the settings. The results obtained with miniature photography are little short of wonderful. You might be startled to see them photographing an automobile driving up to a magnificent castle which was, however, entirely without a roof—until you saw a tiny roof suspended close to the lens of the camera, complete with pepper-pot turrets and flags. The lack of shade, previously commented upon, is made up for on the bare studio lots by stretching sheets on wires above the ground. These have been cut and slashed, and when they blow in the gentle breeze of a wind machine, they throw a very acceptable leafy pattern on the ground below. No one would dream of doubting that the shadows cast came from towering trees.

One day I saw beside one of these effects of "dense foliage" a snow scene for a Canadian Royal Mounted picture. The thermometer registered a hundred and ten that day, but the ice and snow hanging from the high tin cliff refused to melt. The actors, playing their parts in sealskin caps and knitted mufflers, were having a difficult time trying to appear cold in that burning California sun. Their make-up, unlike the artificial ice, did not stay frozen.

On the set none of this appears surprising. You are used to surprises even on the public streets. If you see a tramp, considerably down at the heel, he is apt to be the millionaire Chaplin. Or if you

see a smartly dressed star shopping along the Boulevard, she is apt to be a waitress hoping for "the breaks." Hollywood is full of paradoxes. It is also full of expensive literary talent, but what the talent does besides bathe in the Pacific is difficult to determine. The only thing you can be certain of is that it doesn't write the stories. That is just another one of the paradoxes.

A Pioneer

(Continued from page 4)

tional, welfare, business and industrial organizations making successful use of the movies in promoting their programs.

The Y. M. C. A. Motion Picture Bureau has the privilege of serving in an advisory capacity to hundreds of leaders of these groups who are earnestly seeking motion picture methodology to meet their specific needs.

My participation in the activities of the National Board of Review during the past ten years has enlarged my vision of the potential power of the motion picture.

The future users will richly profit by the experiments of the present pioneers.

This presentation is rather in the form of letting Mr. Zehrung speak for himself as he tells us of his growing interest in motion pictures from the time of seeing his first movie, but when it comes to speaking of himself that he does not do, so we are adding a few notes about him to complete the information. He was born in Tarlton, Ohio, and attended the Roseville High School, the Columbus (Ohio) Arts School as a Fine Arts Scholarship Student, Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, N. Y., as a Scholarship Student in Normal and Practical Arts. He carried on post graduate work at Columbia and New York Universities. For two years Mr. Zehrung was at the Karl Kappes Studio in Munich, Germany, and one year at the Karl Von Rydingsvard Studio. He served for 13 years as instructor in Fine and Manual

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EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

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A department devoted to an impartial critique of the best photoplays. Each picture is reviewed and discussed by a Committee of the National Board composed of trained students and critics of the screen, who are the sponsors of this department. The combined opinions of this Committee are made available to the editors in writing their reviews. Each review aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, mentioning both its excellencies and defects. This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen and thus serve as a means of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers.

SECRETARY

WILTON A. BARRETT

EDITORS

Members of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays

The Blue Angel

Directed by.....Josef von Sternberg

Photographed by { Gunthen Rittau
Hans Schneeberger

Novel "Professor Unrat" by
Heinrich Mann

The Cast

Professor Immanuel Rath.....Emil Jannings

Lola Lola.....Marlene Dietrich

*Produced by Ufa; distributed by
Paramount*

A picture which features the welcome return of Emil Jannings to the screen in a talking part and which at the same time shows us another step in Marlene Dietrich's meteoric ascent to stardom presumes that we are witnessing an event of importance.

That presumption is entirely correct. *The Blue Angel* is surely one of the outstanding pictures of this season's screen offerings. Strictly speaking this is a foreign picture. For it was made in Berlin. But it is a foreign picture with English speech, occasional German interpolations being used for the sake of atmosphere and realism.

Certainly it is astonishingly well suited both to the capacities and the limitations of Emil Jannings. For here again we have a story of the disintegration of a fine character to the point of complete degradation with a tragic flash of his former self at the end which heightens the dramatic contrast. And again the emphasis is upon

character delineation rather than upon action, so that the star's slow, deliberate method and his gift for portraiture are given full opportunity to score.

In the matter of the dialogue and the talking sequences it is even more subtly adapted to the requirements of Mr. Jannings. He plays the part of a professor of English in a German high school. That rather familiar type in the German school system is likely to be correct but halting in his English, to be far from idiomatic and to be all the more sure that he is right because he knows his Shakespeare better than you do. Though slightly comic it is an ideal part for a man like Jannings who was always diffident about his English in real life and who for that reason passed from the American screen with the advent of talking pictures.

Jannings proceeds to give us the schoolmaster par excellence. He is pedantic, brusque, with a certain ludicrous dignity, and he is cordially hated by his pupils. He is greatly perturbed to find them circulating a postcard of an alluring cabaret performer in "The Blue Angel," a dive in an unsavory part of town. Rather inquisitorially investigating their evening activities he meets the temptress and is promptly ruined by a combination of his own suddenly awakened sensual weakness and the code of respectability to which his superiors adhere. With a few changes of locale and character one can, of course, make com-



Marlene Dietrich in "The Blue Angel"

parisons with Janning's previous picture, *The Way of All Flesh*. These comparisons, however, need not be invidious, and the contrasting element of dialogue provides a sufficient difference to make this latest picture refreshing.

The Blue Angel is notable from the directing angle on account of von Sternberg's clever combination of talking and silent film technique. He uses dialogue sparingly and climactically and employs long sequences of purely cinematic story telling. In other words, he allows the camera to tell the story whenever possible rather than letting the actor tell it vocally. That, in a nutshell, is the goal of good talking pictures today, now that the ghost of the all-talking picture has been laid.

Certain talking sequences, or sometimes merely single phrases, are in Ger-

man. This in no way detracts from our understanding of the action. For they are used purely for atmosphere, at times when the action fully conveys the meaning. Thus, for instance, the Professor's housekeeper addresses him in German through the door of his bedroom. But her manner and the breakfast tray in her hands plainly shows that she is telling him that it is time for him to get up and have his breakfast. A policeman in the cabaret who is being berated by one of the performers tells her, in German, to keep her mouth shut. It is perfectly obvious to any English speaking audience that that must be exactly what he is telling her. Intrinsically these German sequences have the same effect which silent sequences would have. It is unnecessary to make them vocal except for atmospheric effect. But the atmospheric ex-



Emil Jannings in "The Blue Angel"

cuse is sufficient, for though the hero is a professor of English, teaching English to his pupils and succumbing to an Eng-

lish traveling cabaret entertainer, he moves in an environment of German speech. As long as pictures have be-

come lingual there is no reason why they should not also become polylingual when the story logically calls for it.

Occasionally Mr. von Sternberg's directorial style leads him into slow tempo as if building up for a dramatic suspense which never quite comes off. This is all the more noticeable in a picture which has a minimum of action and a surplusage of characterization and atmosphere. These defects were perhaps abetted by Jannings. One sometimes wonders whether Jannings, especially since he became an undisputed star, has not always set the tempo of his pictures, however his director might cry for speed. His slow, deliberate method of acting and gesticulating at times anticipated the talking picture while he was still acting on the silent screen.

Marlene Dietrich, whose performance in this picture ranks her very close to the star, gives an excellent account of herself. Her rendition of the part is both trivial and tragic. She is the accidental cause of the Professor's downfall and he is merely an incident in her career of seduction but at the same time her manner suggests that she is an instrument of destruction inevitably making for evil whether she wants to or not.

Her work as we have now seen it in both *The Blue Angel* and in *Morocco* certainly stamps her as an actress of unusual merit. But it is hoped that the powers that be will not force her to repeat the same type of part in her future pictures or label her as a second so-and-so. Her talents are sufficient to allow her to stand on her own merits.



"The Birth of a Nation" in Sound

The National Board has always considered D. W. Griffith's "The Birth of a Nation" which it reviewed in 1914, as one of the most outstanding pictures ever to come before it. This story of the film in "Variety" we are pleased to reprint on the occasion of the picture's rebirth in sound.
—EDITOR'S NOTE.

THE "Nation" springs again and lumps an industry's patriotism with a healthy glimmer into the past. But it must stand comparison. Still engaging, it lacks the luster of youth. Though it reaches for the present with glands of a new science it stops with that gesture. Still interesting, it is shorn of much allurements with which it has held sway as the film champion for a decade and a half or almost. It holds any number of exploitation angles and there should be a lot of people who would like to see it for the first time, or again.

A great original score, assembled by J. C. Briel, has been sounded for the old print. Though tuneful the music as played in reproduction seems shallow in its tenderness and short of the sweeping spectacle that's the essence of this crossroads in picture production. The print is surprisingly clear.

There is again the blare of the Klan's trumpet as the sheeted horses and men gallop, and this ride remains one of filmdom's biggest thrills.

There are battle effects, but with or without sound the film is an immortal document withal to gauge the advance of pictures.

It has been surpassed in technique but the "Nation" is not dead. It's subject is too vital to ever let it die, and it probably is regarded with more sentiment within the industry than any other film ever made. It marked a turning point for pictures.

Believe it or not that idea for ushers covering theatres of today started with the
(Continued on page 14)

The Talkies

“THE TALKIES” by Arthur Edwin Krows, fills a long felt want.

In language that is not too technical it tells us just how the talkies talk, explaining both the apparatus used and the principles of physics upon which that apparatus is constructed. It is good to have such an exposition of a vital mechanism of our culture in these days when most people are prone to accept the marvelous technical advances of our age as if they were commonplaces. We accept the radio as if we were born to it and even the household telephone is used by millions of people who could not give an explanation of how it works which would satisfy the understanding of a schoolboy. The most imaginative inventions are often smugly accepted by persons whose own mental progress has been arrested at the stage when regular mail service was the acme of convenient communication between people out of hearing of each other.

Mr. Krows devotes his first three chapters to an exposition of sound reproduction in the movies. This soon involves him in a review of the invention and perfection of motion pictures in their silent phase, a recapitulation which can do none of us any harm. In fact it is essential for our complete understanding of the talkies. These chapters merit careful reading.

It is very little known that the idea of talking pictures or pictures with some form of sound effect intrinsically linked with the action depicted on the screen goes very far back. Most people are under the impression that the talking picture suddenly emerged out of the silence of the ether when Warner Brothers stood the industry on its head with their production of the epoch-making *Jazz Singer*. This is far from being the case. The attempt to use sound is almost as old as the motion picture itself. Edison, who invented the motion picture, was interested almost immediately in experi-

ments to synchronize it with a disc record. Sporadic experiments continued right along. De Forest began his work on the Phonofilm in 1919, and all those interested in the problem were greatly interested in and built up their work from the Photophone invented by Alexander Graham Bell, the father of the telephone.

It is also necessary to bear in mind that both the telephone and the radio were basic in the development of the talkies. In fact, without the device of amplification, familiar to all radio fans, talking pictures could never have been made practical for theatre audiences.

Coming to the latest developments of the technique of making talkies Mr. Krows takes us into the sound studios and shows that many of the early difficulties of the talkies have been removed with astonishing success and rapidity. Thus the early fears that sound would deprive motion pictures of their range and mobility have been largely allayed. The microphone can follow the actors almost at will and the camera is now insulated against extraneous sound and moves on noiseless rubber wheels which restores its freedom of action and again makes possible the use of a wide variety of camera angles. Sound and speech can now be shaded and refined to the subtleties of natural reception by the ear. The difficulties of making talkies on exterior locations have been similarly overcome.

In reviewing the problems and the possibilities of the talkies in the remaining chapters of his book Mr. Krows draws upon his rich experience on the stage and on the screen. He differentiates stage from screen art in a convincing manner and makes a plea for the emancipation of the screen through increasingly original productions by men free from traditions and conventions. He also breaks a lance for the National Board's long upheld contention that pictures must be made in sufficient variety of artistic

form and intellectual calibre to meet the demands of particular or selected audiences rather than according to the industry's exploded dream of making pictures for the lowest common denominator of a mythical audience of world-wide morons.

"The Talkies" is highly recommended to all members of the National Board of Review and all its affiliated groups and motion picture study clubs which are trying to view and understand the motion picture as a social force in the community.

(*Henry Holt and Co.*, \$2.00)

The Birth of a Nation

(Continued from page 12)

"Nation." It may have been Jeff McCarthy's idea or it may have been Griffith's. Dressing up a film theatre with the help began when this film opened fifteen years ago at the Liberty. Girl ushers were in crinoline to salute the incoming customers. It was also the first film to play at two dollars top. Just fifteen years later it's still good for Broadway at seventy-five cents. That's not bad.

Nearly all the cast have since carved a niche for themselves. Some are gone, but they're remembered from a picture which startled the amusement world in 1915 by showing in twelve reels. It has been shorn since for running time.

This film cost around \$110,000 to make and Billy Bitzer's photography and Breil's score still stand out. In fact, this score and the one assembled for Metro's *Big Parade* are generally conceded to be the best pictures have ever known. Up to 1919 the "Nation" grossed \$4,500,000.

There's too much epic history involved to ever let the "Nation" die altogether. It's a landmark and certainly the champion re-issue film of them all—which it will so remain.

The Year's Best

THE problem of selecting the ten best pictures of the year becomes increasingly difficult as critics realize that the talking picture may have two separate and distinct virtues. There is the talkie which is simply a photographed and film vocalized stage play which may be meritorious in proportion as it reproduces the original and makes it accessible to screen audiences. The other type uses dialogue and sound effects merely as new devices to further the true cinematic development of the screen beyond the point where the silent picture left off. This is, of course, the artistically more important picture. But the time has not yet come to carry out this differentiation rigorously since the talkie is still in a highly unstable and experimental stage. The following list therefore contains pictures of both types as selected by the Exceptional Photoplays Committee of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures which throughout the year reviews all pictures that may be eligible for such a list.

An additional list of five pictures represents the Board's selection of the best foreign films of the year.

AMERICAN

<i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i>	Universal
<i>Holiday</i>	Pathe
<i>Laughter</i>	Paramount
<i>The Man from Blankley's</i>	Warner
<i>Men Without Women</i>	Fox
<i>Morocco</i>	Paramount
<i>Outward Bound</i>	Warner
<i>Romance</i>	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
<i>The Street of Chance</i>	Paramount
<i>Tol'able David</i>	Columbia

FOREIGN

<i>High Treason</i>	Tiffany
<i>Old and New</i>	Amkino
<i>Soil</i>	Amkino
<i>Storm Over Asia</i>	Amkino
<i>Zwei Herzen im ¾ Takt</i>	Assoc. Cinemas

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

A "Reel" Club

The best way to gain and hold the desired interest of young people in any activity is, as all those experienced in such work have found out, to give them a part in it. The sense of ownership in the undertaking is a more powerful magnet than any amount of prepared programs ever could be. Here is a story of what a number of boys are doing with motion pictures for the good of themselves and the community, which may contain valuable suggestion for other organizations concerned with the film interests of young people.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

IF a prize were to be awarded to the busiest boys' club in Chicago, undoubtedly one of the strong contenders for the honor would be the Reel Movie Club, an organization of 35 boys of the Austin Y. M. C. A., Chicago.

Not only does this club of young movie

enthusiasts hold a regular club meeting once a week, but through what they call their "program service" they put on shows for the Y. M. C. A., churches, Sunday Schools and various groups of this kind. And more than that, they have recently started a school in motion picture photography with regular classes two nights a week. As Andy would say, "Ain't dat sump'n'!"

This is strictly a club of, by and for boys. The members whose ages range mostly between 12 and 16 do all the work and control the affairs of the organization. In the two and one half years it has been in existence, the club has been entirely self-supporting and has handled funds totaling more than \$1,500. This represents dues paid in by members and money raised from shows. Their most successful show was *Ben Hur*. More than 500 people saw this picture on the several occasions on which it was given.



*The
boys
study
their
new
sound
machine*

The boys recently added to their equipment by the purchase of the very latest sound apparatus for their movie projector which cost them \$150—a rather daring step for a group of boys their age. But this is not their first venture and they feel confident they can pay for it with the proceeds of their shows. In fact, they have already made a payment of \$35, which represents the profit from their feature film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* presented at the Y. M. C. A. on October 26. Their last show, *Sorrell and Son* was given on December 13.

In addition to the boy officers of the club there is an executive board made up of slightly older boys who have graduated from the club and who now act as instructors. The original organizer and present sponsor of the club is Robert Mould.

The Reel Movie Club can attribute its existence to the power of modern advertising. In reading an advertisement for amateur motion picture machines one day, the idea occurred to Mr. Mould that here was something of interest to boys. So he explained his plan to a group of them and they decided to pay dues in advance and buy a machine. This first machine, a 9 millimeter size, was however, a disappointment. It was too small and the pictures were not very clear. They next bought a 16 millimeter standard amateur size machine which gave better satisfaction.

During this time the boys were learning a lot about motion pictures. They were pressing buttons, pulling levers, turning cranks and practicing at actually putting on shows. In addition, they were visiting motion picture theatres and taking notes while the manager explained the workings of the apparatus in use there. So it was with a far wider knowledge that the third machine was purchased, this time a 35 millimeter standard professional size projector.

With the recently acquired new talkie equipment, the boys feel that they are now very much in the motion picture business for a group of amateurs. But right now

they are making even more ambitious plans. Up to this time their work has been confined to projection only. As soon as their new sound equipment is paid for they propose to buy a camera and begin the production and filming of their own plays. This, however, is still a matter of the future.

The new talkie equipment the boys recently bought is of the Vitaphone type. And right here it might be well to straighten out a technical point. As one of the boys explained, there are two systems of talking pictures in use—Vitaphone and Movietone. The difference between the two is that Vitaphone uses a wax record somewhat like a phonograph record and Movietone has the sound recorded on the film itself in the form of light and dark shadings. As the film passes through the projector a light plays through these shadings on a photoelectric cell which controls the sound. One of the fine points in operating the Vitaphone is to keep the film and sound synchronized. In fact the more the boys delved into the entire subject the more they discovered there was to learn. And this is where the school comes in.

Realizing that in system there is progress, the boys decided to meet two evenings a week and receive instruction. The school has three steps or "degrees." The first one is called the "beginner's projection degree." Boys who pass this test are considered qualified to operate an ordinary silent machine. Those who pass the second degree are permitted to operate a silent machine with sound in the form of music, but not synchronized. Those who pass the third degree are considered ready to operate a fully synchronized movie-talkie show. In anticipation of the time when they will be filming their own plays an engineer at the Western Electric Company has already been secured as an advisor and instructor. As an indication of how seriously the boys take this school, it should be said that one of the things required for completion of the course is a thorough knowledge of the

Illinois state law governing motion picture operators.

One of the most interesting features of the club is its program service. By this means the boys are giving real help both to the Austin Y and to the other organizations for whom they provide motion picture entertainment. An example of this is the free show they recently put on for the Old People's Home at Maywood, near Chicago. Their regular charge is about four dollars.

The Reel Movie Club members claim to be the first boys' club in the city to operate their own sound equipment.—(*Reprinted from Y. M. C. A. News, Chicago*).

A Pioneer

(Continued from page 8)

Arts in the New York City Schools. In 1916 he became affiliated with the Y. M. C. A. International Committee and Department of Exhibits and in 1918 became Director of the Motion Picture Bureau of the National Council of Y. M. C. A.'s of the United States. In this position he has done much to make the motion picture an important part of Y. M. C. A. activity in entertainment and education and moreover his interests have not been confined to this one organization for the film service of the Y. M. C. A.'s in the compilation of catalogs and the distribution of films has found wide fields in usage among many groups. Mr. Zehrung's connection with the National Board of Review began in 1919 when he was extending a plan for using motion pictures in the various Y. M. C. A.'s of the country. He has served on the Review Committee, Exceptitnal Photoplays Committee, the General Committee and on the Executive Committee since 1923. He has been unceasing in his loyalty to and support of the work of the Board on these different committees.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

"IT is true of pictures, too," might be said of the following editorial which appeared in the New York Times regarding young people's interest in books—"A reporter for the Des Moines Register called upon Mr. Louis Untermeyer at the conclusion of a lecture by him. He found a group of high school students making their farewells, talking to the poet as if they had known him all their lives. After they had gone he told the reporter that he learned a great deal from children. Apparently one of the things he learned is that they cannot be forced to take an interest in books which their parents and teachers think they should read. But that is no reason for giving up hope of getting them to read eagerly poetry and prose classics. Mr. Untermeyer recommends adroit suggestions rather than commands. When you give a child a book with the remark that it is good, and "you really should read it," he is instantly on guard against it. A good literary dose is no more welcome to him than castor oil. The poet does not go to extremes in his suggestions for luring children. He is not in favor of hiding and forbidding the books that you want boys and girls to read. They are not so contrary-minded as all that. As for poetry, it comes as naturally to their taste as rhythm until they are taught by adults that it is something set apart and difficult to understand."

JANUARY is the time of resolutions so we will pass on this wise one in the form of a Matinee Creed by the Junior Editor of the Charlotte (N. C.) *Observer* for the little "matineers" of her city:

I will be very quiet.

I will be very still.

For, if I will behave myself,
Everybody will.

I will act very grown-up;
Look, listen, use my brain.
For, if I do, this theatre
Will want me here again.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

REVIEW COMMITTEE

Consists of approximately 250 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services for the review of pictures.

A department devoted to reviews of the best popular entertainment and program pictures. Each picture is reviewed by a group of the Review Committee of the National Board of Review. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. This department seeks to furnish the reader with a guide to the pictures most worthy of popular theatre patronage.

DEPARTMENT STAFF

FRANCIS C. BARRETT
HELEN CAHILL

EDITOR
BETTINA GUNCZY

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially interesting or well done but not rated for "Exceptional Photoplays."

The Bat Whispers

Directed by.....Roland West
Starring.....Chester Morris
Play "The Bat" by Mary Roberts Rinehart
and Avery Hopwood

MYSTERY drama in which terrifying things happen in a country house beset by "The Bat." The photographic effects and fantastic lighting make this picture very entertaining.

Family audience.
(United Artists—8 reels)

The Boudoir Diplomat

Directed by.....Malcolm St. Clair
Starring { Ian Keith
 { Betty Compson
Play "The Command to Love" by Rudolf
Lothar and Frits Gottwald

A pleasing light comedy with clever dialogue. Commanded to impress several married ladies for diplomatic reasons a young man becomes rather entangled but

manages to free himself from the difficulties.

Mature audience.
(Universal—8 reels)

Charley's Aunt

Directed by.....Al Christie
Starring.....Charles Ruggles
Play by Brandon Thomas

A highly amusing talking version of the well-known comedy in which Charley's expected aunt is impersonated by one of his college friends with laughable complications.

Family audience.
(Columbia—9 reels)

The Cohens and the Kellys in Africa

Directed by.....Vin Moore
Starring.....{ Charlie Murray
 { George Sidney
Screen story by Vin Moore and Edward
Luddy

AMUSING picture of the Cohens' and Kellys' trip to Africa to obtain ivory for their piano business. This film stands out from the other Cohen and Kelly pictures on account of the animal shots.

Family audience.
(Universal—7 reels)

The Command Performance

Directed by.....Walter Lang

SHORT SUBJECTS**Ain't Nature Grand**

(Vitaphone No. 4620)

Song cartoon.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Vitaphone—1 reel)

Angles of Angling

(Spotlight Series)

Lovely scenes in this reel on the art of fishing. Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Pathe—1 reel)

Circus Time

Diminutive cartoon folk in amusing circus stunts.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(R K O—1 reel)

Dixie Chase

(Spotlight Series)

Fine scenes of fox hunting in North Carolina. Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Pathe—1 reel)

Excuses

(Bruce Scenic)

Beautiful scenic depicting the excuses man makes to be outdoors.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Paramount—1 reel)

A Hollywood Theme Song

Amusing travesty in which the hero takes his musicians with him everywhere and bursts into song upon the slightest provocation. Family audience.

(Educational—2 reels)

In Alaska

(Oswald Cartoon)

The Lucky Rabbit visits the frozen North. Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Universal—1 reel)

In the Desert

Colored scenic of the West.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Tiffany—1 reel)

King of Bugs

(Aesop Fable)

Amusing cartoon.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Pathe—1 reel)

Mars

(Oswald Cartoon)

The Lucky Rabbit goes to Mars and finds many strange things.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Universal—1 reel)

Mickey's Bargain

Mickey takes his gang out to hunt Indians.

Family audiences. Junior matinee.

(R K O—2 reels)

Monarchs of the Field

(Spotlight Series)

Excellent shots of setters and pointers in a quail hunt.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Pathe—1 reel)

Mysterious Mose

An entertaining cartoon.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Paramount—1 reel)

Nine Nights in a Bar Room

A troupe of monkeys cleverly imitating human beings in a parody on "Ten Nights in a Bar Room."

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Tiffany—2 reels)

Ol' King Cotton

Good negro singing. Family audience.

(Paramount—1 reel)

On a Sunday Afternoon

Comedy song cartoon number.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Paramount—1 reel)

Paramount Pictorial No. 3

The world at large.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Paramount—1 reel)

Pathe Audio Review Nos. 48-52

Family audience.

(Pathe—1 reel each)

Pigskin Capers

(Terry-Toons)

Amusing cartoon of a football game.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Educational—1 reel)

Please Go 'Way and Let Me Sleep

Bouncing ball song cartoon.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Paramount—1 reel)

Row, Row, Row

Comedy song number.

Family audience.

(Paramount—1 reel)

Screen Snapshots Nos. 2-3

Tour through Hollywood showing some of the celebrities at work and play.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Columbia—1 reel each)

Spirit of Showgun

(Vagabond Adventurers Series)

The wonders of the Land of the Rising Sun. Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Pathe—1 reel)

Stone Age Stunts

(Aesop Fables)

Amusing cartoon of the strange animals of the Stone Age.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Pathe—1 reel)

Strange As It Seems Nos. 4-5

Strange people and things all over the world.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Universal—1 reel each)

The Sultan's Camp of Victory

(Around the World with Burton Holmes)

Educational lecture scenic.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—1 reel)

A Tale of the Alhambra

(Around the World with Burton Holmes)

Interesting travelogue.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—1 reel)

That Little Bit of Heaven

(Around the World with Burton Holmes)

Beautiful scenic.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—1 reel)

Voice of Hollywood No. 24

A parade of famous Hollywood personalities.

Family audience.

(Tiffany—1 reel)

Wild Man's Land

The Rambling Reporter pictures the wild man of Borneo and his friend, the orang-outang.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Columbia—1 reel)

Winter

(Silly Symphonies)

Clever cartoon of a ground hog who fails to see his shadow.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Columbia—1 reel)

Wizard Land

(Vagabond Adventures Series)

The Vagabond Director takes us to the Land of Head Hunters.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

(Pathe—1 reel)

THE BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL
of the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures
offers through its
AFFILIATED BETTER FILMS COMMITTEES
An Opportunity to Promote
Better Motion Picture Programs in Your Home Theatre

The Better Films Committee or Motion Picture Study Club plan has been found by many communities to be an adaptable and effective method of accomplishing telling organized local work for better pictures.

The purposes of the Better Films Committees affiliated with the Better Films National Council are:

To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

The Better Films National Council as an aid in carrying out these purposes furnishes an information service through its various publications.

Please use the coupon below and write for the publications you yourself would like or would like to have sent to interested friends.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. VI, No. 2



February, 1931



Scene from "Cimarron," the Oklahoma epic (see page 11)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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In the Picture

THE Sixteenth Annual Luncheon of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures has now become history but as it is current history, we will give here a newsreel picture of it. It was held in New York City on Saturday, January 24th, as the culminating event of a three-day Conference on the subject of "The Community Plan of Motion Picture Support and Interest." Over 500 guests were assembled in the ballroom of the Hotel Pennsylvania. The Chairman of the Hostess Committee was Mrs. Oliver Hariman. While she and her associates were receiving the speakers and guests of honor in an ante-room, where reporters and photographers were busy, music was entertaining those finding their places in the ballroom. This music was supplied by a colorfully arrayed Hungarian Gypsy orchestra.

When the speakers table on the long dais was filled, there were to be seen many celebrities. The speakers included Hon. William N. Doak, Secretary of the United States Department of Labor, Russell Owen, newspaper correspondent of the Byrd Expedition, Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance, star of the Indian film, *The Silent Enemy*, Peter J. Brady, President of the Federation Bank and Trust Company, A. G. Balcom, Director of Visual Education, Newark (N. J.) Schools, and Dr. Fredric C. Howe, member of the Executive Committee, National Board of Review. The screen

celebrities included Maurice Chevalier, Yvonne Vallee (Mrs. Chevalier), Ernst Lubitsch, Marilyn Miller, Basil Rathbone, Irene Delroy, Estelle Taylor, Ernest G. Schoedsack, producer of *Chang* and *Rango* and Eugene Augustin Lauste, veteran film inventor.

The other members of the Executive Committee of the National Board in addition to Dr. Howe were seated there and of course, the toastmaster of the occasion, Mayor John T. Alsop, Jr., of Jacksonville, Florida.

Many of our readers were able to hear the program from a distance as it was broadcast over a nation-wide network through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Those interested in the work of the National Board and its expression at this annual meeting were many more than those gathered there that day. A testament of this is the number of telegrams and letters which were received. Some of which follow:

"THE National Board of Review of Motion Pictures is a citizens' organization of volunteer workers. It has been actively engaged for twenty-three years in a most creditable and important civic function. You who are gathered here today, delegates to this luncheon, are the leaders of the movement and are to be congratulated on the sympathetic, capable



Hostess, Speakers and Guests at the Annual Luncheon of the Board

and intelligent manner in which you are performing a constructive task on behalf of, and of great value to, all good citizens not only of the United States but, because of the universal circulation of American films, of the world.

"As one who has profited by your labors I greet you and thank you. I am sorry that official duties prevent my doing so in person. I hope the lunch will be as tasteful to your palates as your work has been to the motion picture public. I know that in the future the beneficent results of your endeavors will be increasingly apparent and satisfactory to all."—Charles Curtis, Vice-President of the United States.

"I keenly regret my inability to be present at the Sixteenth Annual Luncheon of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, the membership of which includes many close personal friends. I am glad to

have this opportunity, however, of sending my hearty congratulations and an appreciation of the splendid public service your organization is performing.

"To find so many public-spirited men and women devoting their energies to a cause which has for its ultimate aims, wholesome entertainment, social betterment, enlistment of popular interest in educational undertakings, dissemination of information and knowledge of the habits, customs and aspirations of the people of other nations, all of which tends to promote international amity and understanding, elevation of moral standards, in a word, improvement of the condition of mankind, is inspirational."—Franklin D. Roosevelt, Governor of New York.

"I will be delighted if you will extend my greetings to the guests at the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures

luncheon and my best wishes for the continued success of the great and important business in which they are engaged."—Calvin Coolidge.

"**I**T is a matter of regret to me that I cannot attend the Annual Luncheon of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures. Believing, as I do, that the best censorship is that which springs from the people themselves and from the proper education of public opinion, I am interested in the experience of your board. I know that you have had a successful career and have had good co-operation from many social agencies. I hope that you will be able to continue your constructive work."—Alfred E. Smith.

"**W**HILE celebrating my silver jubilee it gives me the utmost pleasure to congratulate the National Board of Review upon the sincere and effective service rendered to this industry by its oldest and most unselfish organization."—Carl Laemmle, President, Universal Pictures Corporation.

"**M**AY I take this opportunity of telling you what a genuine pleasure it was the other night to meet the group of high school critics and to congratulate you on the splendid work you are doing. I feel that this year all of us should concentrate on bringing the children back to motion pictures."—Mary Pickford.

"**I** should be delighted to join my fellow members of the Board at this luncheon, and the reason that prevents my being present is that I will be lecturing on the West Coast on that date. Please, therefore, express my regrets to those in attendance at the luncheon.

"I have not forgotten the generosity of the National Board of Review in having provided a liberal supply of motion picture films for the entertainment of the

members of our Antarctic Expedition, and I want you all to know that they were a big factor in the contentment of personnel throughout our stay in the Antarctic, but particularly through the long winter night.

"Wishing you a successful luncheon, and with best wishes for a prosperous New Year to the members of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures."—Richard E. Byrd.

"**A**M in complete sympathy with the National Board of Review and the splendid work it is doing. Congratulations and best wishes for continued success."—Harry M. Warner, President, Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc.

"**I** extend to you and your organization my most sincere congratulations on the achievements of your twenty-two years of activity."—Thomas A. Edison.

"**M**AY I express my best wishes for a most successful meeting which will result in a still further increase in the important work that the Board of Review is doing in the development of the use of motion pictures for social, cultural and educational purposes."—Dwight W. Morrow, United States Senator from New Jersey.

"**D**EEPLY regret that the preparation of my next picture prevents me from attending your Annual Luncheon and there voicing my appreciation of the unique and valuable work the National Board of Review has been doing for years. Please accept my best wishes and my allegiance to the cinema ideals which you so ably represent."—Josef von Sternberg, Paramount Director.

"**T**HE National Board of Review is to be commended for its constructive work to improve the films in the United States. The basic philosophy of the Board is one of selection not censorship. Censor-

ship often defeats its own end and is just as objectionable with respect to the screen as in every other form. Free speech is a fundamental American doctrine. Every individual is responsible for his abuse of that right but he is entitled to his day in court and to the benefits of a jury trial. Censorship attempts to prevent in advance of the commission of a crime which may be purely imaginary except in the minds of the censors from whose decision the individual has no appeal."—Bronson Cutting, United States Senator from New Mexico.

"ON the occasion of the Sixteenth Annual Luncheon Conference of the National Board of Review, I extend my congratulations for the results achieved by the volunteer citizen workers who compose your organization. Just as long as the National Board performs its duty effectively, legal consorship will not be a necessity nor gain real headway in the country."—Pat Harrison, United States Senator from Mississippi.

"THIS luncheon marks the twenty-second year of uninterrupted service on the part of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures and I am pleased to tender my warmest congratulations upon your upward and onward trend. That a volunteer organization should accomplish such aims, and after almost a generation, occupy so high a place in the minds of Americans everywhere as the National Board of Review only proves the adage that right is right and truth will prevail."—Richard L. Metcalfe, Mayor of Omaha, Nebraska.

A review of the Conference sessions held the three days preceding the Luncheon will be given in the magazine. The first session begins in The Better Films Forum, page 17 of this issue.

Resolutions

RESOLUTIONS growing out of the discussion periods of the Conference were presented by the Resolutions Committee and adopted by the Conference body at the final session of the Conference on Saturday, January 24th. The resolutions are:

Junior Matinee and Review

WHEREAS, this Conference believes that parental responsibility, reinforced by information as to the audience suitability of films, is the first principle in providing suitable motion picture entertainment for children; and

WHEREAS, we believe that parental responsibility is given a further opportunity for exercise by special children's matinees which seek to present a special program of pictures under community auspices; and

WHEREAS, we thoroughly believe in juniors' study of films as an assistance in determining public reactions to the screen and more particularly the attitude of youth; and

WHEREAS, we are firmly convinced that the judgment of present day youth with regard to screen entertainment is essentially critical, frank and sound and as such should be incorporated in any attempt at scientific study of public attitudes and reactions; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that this Conference go on record as endorsing:

- (1) the juniors' matinee, and
- (2) the juniors' group study of the motion picture; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, while this Conference believes in sympathetic and co-operative relations between public and exhibitor, it goes on record as stating its preference, where juniors' matinees are established, for the selection, wherever possible, of such pictures for children's matinees by the community group rather than for the selection of such programs by the exhibitor.

Junior Pictures

WHEREAS, this Conference wishes to reiterate its recognition of the usefulness of community work in the juniors' motion picture matinee field; and

WHEREAS, it recognizes the necessity of having an immediately available supply of films adapted for the special type of program involved; and

WHEREAS, it is felt that the non-availability of such suitable films constitutes a serious barrier to the effective conduct of the work; and

WHEREAS, experience teaches that at the present time many of the most suitable films for children which have been produced are not now available, due to their being out of print or to the extreme scarcity of prints; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED,

(1) that this Conference endorse the plan of a basic list of twenty-five films to be submitted by groups co-operating with the National Board of Review, and

(2) that if such films can be made available, it further endorses the proposal to take steps to guarantee their distribution among a sufficient number of groups to insure the producer against loss in case of the making of new prints; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that upon this selection being completed, it be brought to the attention of the producers or distributors, or both, of such films with the view to obtaining new prints where necessary, together with a standard rental, based upon a standard admission fee, which shall apply to all groups using these films in the juniors' matinee field.

Visual Education

WHEREAS, this Conference believes in the full social use of motion pictures in all their possible fields of application; and

WHEREAS, we believe that the education of public opinion must precede such application of motion pictures in the field

of visual instruction, and further, that a major use of the motion picture, in a social sense will ultimately embrace the entire educational field, and that public opinion can be brought to support this development by having the progress of visual instruction constantly called to its attention; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that this Conference most emphatically endorse the education of public opinion through organized group effort in support of progressive teachers and scientists who are striving to use the motion picture in visual education in the classroom, the study and the laboratory.

Opposition to Censorship

WHEREAS, this Conference, brought together for the purpose of considering the "Community Plan for Motion Picture Support and Interest," is convinced that the first necessity is the sympathetic study of all factors involved in the problem of finding the best social uses of the motion picture, and that such a study should be conducted on a realistic basis which directly implies the democratic principle of reaching solutions by participation and consent of the people, and should find ultimate expression through the self-determination of audiences with regard to the type of entertainment the public prefers; and

WHEREAS, this preference can be most intelligently exercised upon the basis of impartially acquired information by sympathetic groups disinterested, but willing to work in a co-operative sense with those preparing films in all branches of their production and distribution; and

WHEREAS, it is recognized that special provision should always be made for the needs of children with regard to screen entertainment; Now therefore,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this Conference:

(1) reaffirm its emphatic and unyielding opposition to legal censorship, Federal and state, and

(Continued on page 23)

America's Sweetheart

THE field of interest and the personnel of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review are both being increased through the addition of a Junior Review Committee. This Committee just beginning to function, includes young people of high school and junior college age, from fourteen to twenty years.

In an endeavor to place its work of review and recommendation on a more scientific and accurate basis, the National Board came to the conclusion that its findings must carry also the point of view of youth. Young people are critical, discerning, capable of real constructive and sane observation about motion pictures. This decision and the resulting plan of the National Board has met with favor and interest on all sides.

An interest especially appreciated by these younger reviewers was that of Mary Pickford on her recent visit to New York City. She received a number of them at her hotel and was photographed with them and talked with them regarding their activity.

In response to our request for impressions of this interview, there has come to us several interesting stories which we are happy to pass on to our readers interested in junior review work and in Mary Pickford, and that is everyone.

America's Sweetheart

I was most happy to be chosen one of the group to interview Mary Pickford. There were nine of us and as we waited in her boudoir in the Sherry-Netherland Hotel we noticed the portrait of Douglas Fair-



Mary Pickford with Junior Reviewers

banks on her dressing table. Although I knew the screen star was a very small person, I was surprised and thrilled to be greeted by one of such diminutive stature. Miss Pickford was very gracious and made us feel quite at ease in her presence. Her unstinted praise of Greta Garbo impressed me more than anything else she said. She proclaimed Garbo as one of an individual and attractive personality, to express her exactly—"she is one woman in ten thousand." Such a statement from one who has seen many stars and who is engaged in similar profession indicated broadmindedness in the character of Mary Pickford. *Kiki* is to be our tiny lady's next picture. I cannot seem to visualize her in the title role, for she is such a sweet little thing and does not seem to possess the fire and naughtiness which Lenore Ulric portrayed in the stage production.

Miss Pickford told us she was very much embarrassed in some of the scenes as she appeared in her "unmentionables." However, I suppose, she must emerge from the juvenile type eventually although she stated that she would rather revert to the more wholesome kind of picture. Somehow, I think she will always be remembered as she was in *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *Annie Rooney*, etc.

After we left the Sherry Netherland we realized why she is and always will be called "America's Sweetheart."

I am sure all of us who met Miss Pickford enjoyed our afternoon and we wish to thank the National Board of Review and to tell them that we anticipate further pleasant association with them.—Mildred C. Maranghi, Dickinson High School, Jersey City, N. J.

My Impressions of Mary Pickford

I was indeed a very thrilled and excited young lady when I walked into the spacious apartments of Mary Pickford at the Sherry-Netherland Hotel. I'm sure I must have pinched myself more than once to make myself realize I was actually going

to meet the noted screen star, because there was more than one tell-tale black and blue mark.

Mary Pickford is, without a doubt, the most charming woman or perhaps I should say, young lady, I have ever met. One is particularly impressed with her youthful appearance and mannerisms. She is just as thousands have seen her in the role of a young girl on the screen. I am positive that she will always remain that way—one can't imagine her as a mature woman—that is one role which I think, and I believe others agree with me — that Mary Pickford could not portray successfully.

One thing that pleased me above all was Miss Pickford was human! By that I mean she was natural, nothing was affected. We are likely to imagine all noted screen stars to be shallow, delightfully superficial and constantly mindful of being an actor or actress. As for Miss Pickford, one was not allowed to imagine for a moment that her surroundings or environment were artificial.

I wholly believe that Miss Pickford is one of the rare exceptions that did not, and will not, trip on her much be-decked and honored ladder of success and fame.

I was honored, very much so in fact, to have her talk with us as long as she did. We all realized that she was indeed a busy and much sought after young lady, but still she had time for all those who wished an interview with her. She is a very ready conversationalist and certainly has the magnetic charm of holding any audience's utmost attention. She mentioned one or two little things about the motion pictures which I eagerly devoured. There were glimpses of her childhood and present day life that more than interested us.

I suppose it would be rather foolish of me to attempt to describe Miss Pickford as she is so well-known. I was so impressed with her whole adorable, dainty, petite person, that I shall always remember my personal glimpse of the famous Mary Pickford and label it as one of my most

thrilling experiences.—Virginia Randall, Scudder School, New York City.

A Visit with Mary Pickford

I want to thank the National Board of Review for the unusual and thoroughly delightful treat which I shared with several other students when I visited Miss Pickford's suite at the Sherry-Netherland. It had never before been my privilege to meet such a celebrity.

I was gratified to find that my former opinion of Miss Pickford remained unchanged. I carried away with me the impression of a most intelligent and interesting personality possessing all the poise, daintiness and charm of manner that is hers on the screen.

She had the unusual ability to put us all at ease and although it was apparent that she was rushed by appointments, she sat and talked entertainingly of her new picture *Kiki* and other pictures and subjects especially interesting to us.

It was with extreme regret that we left her company but not before she had bid us each goodbye as though she had known us a long time.

It is not at all difficult to see why she has achieved such success in her profession. I am very proud to be a member of the initial Junior Review Committee and I find the work extremely interesting.—Jean Righter, Rutherford (N. J.) High School.

Impressions of an Interview with Mary Pickford

ON Monday, January 19, 1931, I had the privilege of being one of the nine members of the Junior Committee of the National Board of Review, who were granted an interview with Mary Pickford in her suite at the Sherry-Netherland in New York City.

After posing with us for several pictures, Miss Pickford gave us a friendly talk in which she told us of her plans for future pictures and related a number of her experiences during the making of her latest picture *Kiki*. In telling of her plans for the

future, Miss Pickford said that she hoped *Kiki* would be her last picture of the more sophisticated type and that she would be able to make more of the old time sort that caused her to be called "America's Sweetheart."

Miss Pickford expressed a sincere interest in the activities of the Junior Review Committee and said that she thought it was a good idea to obtain the views of the younger generation on motion pictures. She asked each of us to send her a personal letter, expressing our opinion of *Kiki*.

After telling us about recent occurrences in the motion picture field and of her favorites among the recently released pictures, she closed the interview by expressing her happiness at meeting us and wishing us the best of luck in our endeavors.

The outstanding memory of the interview, to me, was the sweet and kindly greetings and the wonderful naturalness of Mary Pickford. She made us all feel as though we were all old friends instead of bare acquaintances. I shall never forget Mary Pickford, "America's Sweetheart."—A. Edward Blainey, Xavier High School, New York City.

My Impressions

I was very much impressed by my interview with Mary Pickford and I would like to call on her again. I think Miss Pickford is the most charming person I have ever had the pleasure to meet.

Being a great actress such as she is, I did not expect her to stay and talk with us. I also found out that her very great fame has not made her feel as though she were above everybody else. I had a very delightful time and hope I can do some more work. I enjoy the reviewing work very much and I am anxious to keep it up.—Sarah E. Webb, Rutherford (N. J.) H. S.

The young men of the party were evidently impressed to such a degree that they were left wordless, for from the three we have but one response. Perhaps the next issue of our Magazine may carry others.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

COMMITTEE

LOUISE W. HACKNEY
RITA C. MCGOLDRICK
FRANCES T. PATTERSON
J. K. PAULDING
CLARENCE A. PERRY
WALTER W. PETTIT

A department devoted to an impartial critique of the best photoplays. Each picture is reviewed and discussed by a Committee of the National Board composed of trained students and critics of the screen, who are the sponsors of this department. The combined opinions of this Committee are made available to the editors in writing their reviews. Each review aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, mentioning both its excellencies and defects. This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen and thus serve as a means of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers.

SECRETARY

WILTON A. BARRETT

EDITORS

Members of the Committee on Exceptional Photoplays

Cimarron

Based upon a novel of the same title by Edna Ferber. Adapted by Howard Estabrook. Directed by Wesley Ruggles. Photographed by Edward Cronjager. With a cast including Richard Dix, Irene Dunne, Estelle Taylor, Nance O'Neil, Edna May Oliver and William Collier, Jr. Produced and distributed by RKO Radio Pictures.

CIMARRON is one of those tales of adventure and achievement that the motion picture can tell better than words can tell it. Rarely has the motion picture told such a tale better than it tells *Cimarron*. For once the word "epic" can be used to say what it meant before the press-agents got hold of it, and say it truthfully: for here is a film that has scope and importance and significance of more than individual size, of a really national character.

Historically, the picture shows the growth of Oklahoma through the decades between the opening up of the wild lands by President Harrison's proclamation and the 1929 gushing of oil wells. This material growth is centered in the evolution of one camp site into a modern city, and the director and the man with the camera have made it sweeping and vivid and credible, a panorama that moves smoothly through the passage of years without hurry or overemphasis yet without giving any impres-

sion of being cluttered or leaving out anything essential.

Against this panoramic background, but a part of it and summing it up, move two figures, a man and his wife. Yancey Cravat is a strutting, grandiloquent fellow, big in stature and big of heart: genial, courageous, restless and adventurous: simple in his honesty, his enthusiasm, his chivalry, his loyalty and his egotism: he can call his wife "Sugar" and mean it, and leave her for years without a qualm simply because he has become tired of staying in one place. He can run a newspaper, or a prayer-meeting, shoot an outlaw, defend a Magdalene, open up a new stretch of territory or lead a regiment, all with the grand manner of an old-time actor or a Western statesman: a romantic type, full of erratic nobility and generosity and vanity, that seems to belong to a far older age than the recent time in which it flourished.

Paired with this man, and as important in the trend of his generation, is his wife Sabra, who left a conservative, comfortable home to share in his pioneering, carrying her Kansas customs and morals with her into the wilderness. When Yancey goes aroaming she keeps the home fires burning, and the newspaper going; when guns have driven out the bad men she turns her editorials against the bad women; with her energy and her clubs and her ideals she fights



Night scene from "Cimarron"—the new town that has sprung up miraculously in the wild lands.

on for civic virtue, and her ultimate reward is to become a Congresswoman.

These two characters are brought to life on the screen with extraordinary vitality. They are created by their author with unusual insight, and entrusted to actors peculiarly gifted to make human beings of them. Richard Dix has rarely found a part so suited to his own personality, and Irene Dunne acts the wife with increasing authority till at the banquet given to celebrate her elevation to the halls of Congress she is at her best. Many of the minor parts are conventional and sentimentalized—the bad men, the outlaw, the fancy woman and her retinue, and the peddler. But they are mere background and not obtrusive, and throw into striking relief the truthful light and shade of the hero and heroine.

The man who wrote the adaptation, Mr. Estabrook, the director, Mr. Ruggles, and

the cameraman, Mr. Cronjager, seem to know what a motion picture is, and how to make one, and the result of their work is notable for being something more than exceptional entertainment. It uses sound and dialogue without losing the essential movement that makes the cinema a different thing from the other arts. Only at the end does it become painfully movieish: Yancey's heroic death, which is not built up to enough to have any force as heroism, and the last sight of him with his palpably false whiskers, is far less effective than to have had merely the hint of his legendary figure disappearing among the fighters at Chateau Thierry. After all, the true climax of the story was Sabra's triumph, and to have had that triumph take the form of a banquet and a speech, with Yancey looming outside in bronze, would have been the perfect rounding out of the Oklahoma epic.

Sous les Toits de Paris

(Under the Roofs of Paris)

*Written and directed by Rene Clair.
Starring Albert Prejean and Pola Illery.
Produced by Rene Clair Productions. Dis-
tributed by Forenfilms.*

IT may be that this picture will not circulate widely through America because foreign tongues are not considered remunerative adjuncts to motion pictures except in localities where there is a definite audience of foreign extraction. It is a pity, for France has not sent us a more delightful movie than this one. As a matter of fact enjoying the picture depends very lit-

tle on being able to understand French, there is so little dialogue in it and the action is so easily followed.

The picture was written and made by France's most distinguished director of comedies—perhaps the best comedy director in all Europe, Rene Clair. In a poll just made by a German newspaper among critics all over the world, this picture was voted the best of the year, receiving more votes than even *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which came second in the final list. It is the first talking film of M. Clair's to cross the ocean.

Out of very slight material comes a gay and charming picture. Its atmosphere recalls the good old "Vie de Boheme," but there is a vast difference between the light-



A street corner crowd, singing, in the French film "Sous les Toits de Paris"

ly loving Bohemians of Murger's day and the similar gentry with whom M. Clair has concerned himself. There is still the good-old-pal business between the two young men, but they are not starving artists but presumably well-fed racketeers, and though one is too devoted a friend to take his pal's raincoat during a storm there is no scruple about stealing a pal's sweetheart. And there is no timid Mimi dying pathetically—the young woman in the modern version gathers her rosebuds with serene assurance and in a state of health that seems likely to remain robust till a hale old age.

Sentiment has been saltily mixed with cheerful cynicism, and the rather commonplace tale of flirtation and light-hearted faithlessness never runs into danger of becoming tearful or tragic.



A scene photographed close under the roof

The tale, briefly, has to do with an attractive girl who appears in the neighborhood where three or four men work more or less together getting a livelihood out of other people's pockets. Their system is never completely divulged, but a part of it

seems to consist in one fellow's collecting a crowd by singing in the street and peddling his song while a confrere moves here and there through the group collecting purses and pocketbooks. The girl's attractiveness works upon one and then upon another and involves complications that include a gang fight, an arrest, and a good deal of Paris night life. In the end she appears to fix her affections definitely on one, but you are not left with the impression that there is any finality about it—some one else will come along, and the pals will be together again.

What gives solidity and its greatest charm to all this is the background and atmosphere of Paris—the French Paris untouched by tourists and never seen in movies. The roofs, the pavements, the narrow streets, the bars and dance halls, the rooms—they smell of the city on the Seine. And all the people in it have that unmistakable outline and substance of reality that is rarely seen outside of the best of the Russian films.

But the enthusiastic analyst of the cinema will find a double pleasure in this picture through watching the way it has been made. He may find the emphasis on the "roofs" motif a bit arty, and the traveling of the camera from roof to street not startlingly novel or significant, but for the rest he will see a fresh and masterly direction in the management of the camera and in the eloquent use of sound to create atmosphere and character. Most of all he will perhaps be struck by the sparing but immensely suggestive employment of actual dialogue. There is hardly more speech than there used to be titles in the best of the silent films, and yet you are satisfied you have heard all that was worth hearing—certainly all that was necessary to hear. It is far more movie than talkie, which exercises the imagination and rests the ear. M. Clair has used the best of the new form without losing any of the good of the old.

*Rango,
the
orang-utan,
in
Schoedsack's
jungle
picture*



Rango

Written, directed, photographed and produced by Ernest G. Schoedsack. Distributed by Paramount Publix.

HERE is something that belongs among motion pictures somewhere on the same level with the Jungle Books among stories. There is a good deal of the Kipling quality to it, especially in the parallels between animal life and the life of human beings. It is amusing, thrilling and touching in a way that no animal picture has been before.

It was made in Sumatra, and its drama is the perpetual danger in which men out in the wilds, and their arboreal brothers, live from the tiger. There is a man, a tiger hunter, and his small son; there is a wise and experienced orang-utan and his son, Rango; and there is their common enemy, the tiger.

It is a simple story of life in the jungle, made vivid by sounds that carry no suspicion of having been created in a studio. How the boy and his father lived, and how Rango and his father lived, till at length the tiger brought death and the boy brought punishment upon him for it. This punish-

ment is brought about by the boy's leading a water buffalo to attack the tiger, and the fight between these two animals is one of the most exciting things of its kind the screen has known. The story's simplicity gives it a singular strength and beauty, and added to that is an extraordinary lot of humor. The monkeys create more laughter than a whole parade of Hollywood's leading funny men.

Mr. Schoedsack has made the picture with superlative patience and skill and sensitiveness. He seems to have caught something of a soul in monkeys, without an atom of sentimentality, as he has certainly caught the terror of the tiger. And he has caught one aspect of nature that has never been on the screen before—dawn in the jungle, with the multitudinous voices of awakening life rising to a tumultuous chorus as the sun comes up.

Playful Pan

A Walt Disney cartoon. Distributed by Columbia Pictures.

AMERICA'S conscious interest in the ballet, definitely so-called, is generally supposed to go no further—if that far—than the repetitious toe-dancing and adagio-dancing and precision-dancing that is endured in the "presentations" with which so many movie-house proprietors inflict their audiences. All of this has been a tiresome imitation of things that came long ago from Europe, most of it with the Ballet Russe.

It probably hasn't occurred to many people that we were evolving a native ballet of our own out in Hollywood, as American as the comic strip, and far livelier and lovelier, as well as more comic. Far be it from us to make that evolution self-conscious, and perhaps arty—but the fact should be noted.

It began when sound was added to the

animated cartoons. The sudden rise of Mickey Mouse—who has already been discovered and touted by the art-lovers, long after the public took him to its bosom—along with Oswald and Flip and all the other inspired creatures who live in a world of perpetual miracle, brought about a release of fantasy and fun such as hasn't happened in too long to reckon. The success of these moving comic strips has led to a mad rush of imitation, and a consequent flagging in inspiration, so that a good many of them are as tedious as any other kind of hack-work. But the best of them have hit high spots of satire, and the worst of them is hardly worse than bad vaudeville.

With the "Silly Symphonies" came the only kind of dance that the screen has been able to make a go of. Each one of the best of them is truly a ballet, whose choreography has gusto, imagination, sometimes beauty and poetry. Most of them lack something in rounded-out form, but *Playful Pan* even achieves the formality of a complete story, all told with figures moving in time to music. Pan—a brownieish Pan—is shown charming all the woodland creatures with his piping. He can make even the trees gyrate in rhythm. At length two swollen angry clouds hear his music, and they can't help dancing fatly to it. Their dancing involves bumping into each other, and when two angry clouds bump together there is lightning. A lightning bolt hits a tree and starts a fire—the spreading flames threaten to exterminate all the forest animals. But Pan is summoned from his cozy branch, and like another Pied Piper he plays to the leaping flames till he has them all dancing and following him. He leads them to a lake and into the water—and the forest, and all the little wild things, are saved.

It lacks something, perhaps, in classic pictorial loveliness, but it is a true product of a sensitive imagination, working in a medium that some critics call the highest form of the motion picture.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

Our Conference in Review

WE hear discussion of new calendars, thirteen month years, five day weeks, daylight savings and so forth but the calendar of the National Board of Review moves around the Annual Conference and Luncheon so that we might say, the Annual meeting having just taken place, January 22nd-24th, another year has ended. But rather we wish to say another year has begun, for although the Conference is a time of summing up, a taking stock as it were, of a year's activity, it is also a beginning, a stimulation of interest is received, and perhaps given, which leads to new contacts, new plans and new activities to carry on through another year.

A survey of the Conference program is set down in this issue of our Magazine as of interest to those of our readers who, we regret, were not present and so that they, with those of our members who were present, may help in a formulation of some basic plans for the extension of the community motion picture work as it has been carried on in the past and an incorporation in future activity of the new ideas and thoughts gained from this Conference.

The Conference opened with a greeting from Dr. Walter W. Pettit, Chairman of the Board.

Mr. Wilton A. Barrett, the Executive Secretary of the Board, as the presiding officer, sketched the purpose of the Conference in the following words, "The work of the National Board is based upon the study of problems involved in the social field of motion pictures. The effort of the Board is more and more to separate facts from what are often merely notions. Because we are living in an age of science today everything that we are doing in the

social field, as well as in the engineering field, and this is social engineering, is being done on a scientific basis. If we are building an engine to run on a track and to run forward and not backward or simply to stand still with the wheels spinning, we must put together a machine that will work.

"That is what the National Board and its affiliated groups in the field are trying to do. If we are going to establish the social uses of the motion picture we must develop the machinery and the machinery must be the result of study. So, the object of the Conference Committee has been to present a program which would indicate with some accuracy and precision the community plan as we understand it. We have called the subject of the Conference, 'The Community Plan of Motion Picture Support and Interest.'

"While the Board is interested, of course, in the field of entertainment, which is a great field, it is also interested in the educational fields where the motion picture may be used socially and again scientifically. It is the purpose of the National Board to set up through the education of public opinion a guide and a sympathetic leadership in these fields as well as the field of entertainment.

"We have separated the Conference into sessions, each session dealing with a particular scope of the Board's work and interest in the use of the motion picture."

"The Community and the Motion Picture in the Theater" was the subject of the first session. The opening speaker of this session was Mr. Albert Howson, scenario editor for Warner Bros. The gist of his talk was a plea for the support of the best pictures. Speaking from the producer's

viewpoint he said, "I wish I could impress people with the sincerity of purpose on the part of the producer when he says, 'I want to give the public what it wants and will pay to see.' It is immaterial to the producer what kind of a picture he produces if he gets his financial return, and if he does not get that, he can not go on producing. You will perhaps be surprised to learn that pictures like *Disraeli*, *Old English*, *Outward Bound* and *Kismet* do not pay for themselves. If Warner Brothers break even on any one of them they will consider themselves fortunate. The producer is wholly in sympathy with the idea for the betterment of films in general, but he is in a commercial business and the more support the finer things receive, the more encouraged he will be to produce more fine things. In the course of time, it will perhaps do away certainly with anything that is suggestive and salacious."

The second speaker on this session was Mr. Arthur E. Krows, Director, Electrical Research Products Corporation, Western Electric Company, who has long been identified with the stage and with the motion picture as director, as critic and as author. One of the most thorough and interesting volumes on the sound motion picture has been written by Mr. Krows entitled 'The Talkies'.* Because of the attention given it upon its recent publication further thoughts by Mr. Krows on motion picture production and distribution were happily received.

The third speaker was one who has had much actual experience in community motion picture activities, Mrs. Alonzo Richardson, secretary of the Atlanta (Ga.) Better Films Committee. She presented from this experience some practical suggestions as follows: "In a city you find two different classes of theatres—the city theatre, that is the downtown theatre, and the community house. They are entirely different in a way and yet very much alike in

another way. We find in both these classes of theatres the need for community atmosphere. We find the need for this same atmosphere of understanding and intelligent appreciation of community wants.

Our community groups must recognize very surely the legitimate rights of the theatre because there is a very fine line drawn sometimes between interference and help. We must recognize the commercial rights of the theatre. It is a business and it must live. At the same time, there can be an atmosphere of sympathetic understanding, which will be mutually helpful to both.

"As some wise person has said, if it is not one thing in life, it is two; so if it is not one problem in better films activity, it is two. By the time you overcome one you have another. The only thing about it is that after you have climbed over one and you meet another, you think, 'Well, I won that other battle and I will win this one, too.'

"One of the first things needed to meet some of the problems in the Better Films work is a sane, conservative and impartial support of the better things. I find as we go along that we are apt, in the cities especially, to be just a bit partial to a theatre that is just a bit partial to us, a theatre where the manager knows us and where we feel so much at home. But if we are doing true Better Films work, we will be sane in our thinking, conservative in our judgment, impersonal and impartial in our support toward the right things.

"Now then, just some of the things we are doing. Our Christmas work was truly community work. The theatres carried trailers of the needy children in Atlanta. The children brought toys and the firemen mended them. The woman's division of the Chamber of Commerce dressed the dolls. The merchants furnished the material.' In one way or another every organization in the City of Atlanta was touched

*"The Talkies" reviewed in the January, 1931, issue of the National Board Magazine.

in that community work for the children and over 3,000 children were made happy.

"One of the most dangerous things is that of the mother who parks her children in the motion picture theatre while she goes to the missionary meeting. It is not a good thing. The informed mother does not do that. How are you going to inform the mother? In Atlanta we publish a Photo-play Guide. The pictures are graded according to the audience suitability and there is no excuse for any mother not to know what her children are seeing. Then if she comes to us with a complain, we can only say, 'It is your own fault.' There is a good deal of protection in that.

"Another way we have of informing the people about the pictures is through the Speakers' Bureau of our Committee. We have in our Better Films Committee representatives from every civic organization. People at large are not quite as interested in the motion pictures as we of the Committee are, so we make an effort to attend the meetings of the different organizations. The speakers are trained. We hold regular classes for them and they are given just such information as will interest a particular group. Speakers are thus ready at a moment's notice to present to a particular group in a very few moments that which is most interesting to that group in regard to pictures.

"We have regular classes in reviewing. The best I can say for that is the criticism of the foremost dramatic critic of our city. He said he thought it was one of the finest pieces of work he had known, that we were studying how to review pictures intelligently and that he considered the reviews sent out by the Review Committee of the Better Films Committee in Atlanta really most excellent. These classes meet once a month, sometimes oftener.

"We have the youth reviewing. Here we receive the utmost co-operation from the school teachers. The principal of the high school is giving us the reviewers from the high school, selecting them herself, and we

are finding that the youth of today is far more discriminating than the older people.

"What are some of the problems that the Better Films Committee has to deal with? The greatest hindrance to the work of the Better Films Committee is well meaning reformers. Another problem is exaggerated and salacious advertising. Then there is the constant change in managers. Another thing sometimes brought out is that the program is too long. What is the answer to our problems? The answer is an understanding co-operation, a recognition of the power of both the theatre and the community group, the manager to know his community, the community group to know the manager, to feel at home in his theatre. I believe that is the answer. When we get in perfect sympathy with each other, have a perfect understanding and do not overstep the fine line of interference in our efforts to help, we are really going to achieve and are going to find that the finer things do pay.

"The public is becoming more and more educated, becoming more and more appreciative of the best and more intent upon supporting the best. The duty of the community group, therefore, is to back the good things to the limit. What does this demand? Work, hard, unremitting, ceaseless work, fearless courage to stand for the best and to enlist the support for this best; we will raise that talked of picture level of intelligence. We will see certain improvements in pictures. We will see the more certain reaction of the audiences to this improvement, a reaction which shows that the efforts of the community groups are bearing fruit, slowly it is true but surely, and in time not so far distant we are going to have really educated, intelligent and enthusiastic audiences for all that is finest and best."

Other sessions of the Conference will be reviewed in the next issue of the Magazine.
—EDITOR'S NOTE.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

REVIEW COMMITTEE

Consists of approximately 250 trained members representative of widely varied interests who volunteer their services for the review of pictures.

A department devoted to reviews of the best popular entertainment and program pictures. Each picture is reviewed by a group of the Review Committee of the National Board of Review. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures. This department seeks to furnish the reader with a guide to the pictures most worthy of popular theatre patronage.

DEPARTMENT STAFF

FRANCIS C. BARRETT
HELEN CAHILL

EDITOR

BETTINA GUNCZY

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially interesting or well done but not rated for "Exceptional Photoplays."

The Bachelor Father

Directed by Robert Leonard. Starring Marion Davies. Play by Edward Childs Carpenter. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 10 reels.

SOPHISTICATED comedy based upon a Belasco production in which an English lord gathers his three children from different parts of the world around him. Made amusing by excellent acting. *Mature audience.*

Beau Ideal

Directed by Herbert Brenon. Starring Lester Vail, Ralph Forbes and Loretta Young. Story by Percival C. Wren. RKO. 9 reels.

AN American boy joins the Foreign Legion in an effort to find the man who is his rival in love. A companion picture to the popular *Beau Geste*. *Mature audience.*

Captain Applejack

Directed by Robert Henley. Starring John Halliday. Play by Walter Hackett. Warner. 6 reels.

RATHER amusing romance of a young man who wants to sell his old home in order to seek romance and adventure

but much to his surprise he finds that he does not have to look far for them. *Family audience.*

Dance Fools Dance

Directed by Harry Beaumont. Starring Joan Crawford. Story by Aurania Rouverol. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 9 reels.

Aspoiled society girl when thrown upon her own enters newspaper work and becomes involved in a gang warfare. Joan Crawford's acting in several dramatic scenes marks again her graduation from flapper roles. *Mature audience.*

*The Easiest Way

Directed by Jack Conway. Starring Constance Bennett and Robert Montgomery. Play by Eugene Walter. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 8 reels.

AN up-to-date version of Eugene Walter's play about a girl who did not have the courage to play fair with a man who had forgiven her lurid past. The starred players head an excellent cast. *Mature audience.*

Fair Warning

Directed by Alfred Werker. Starring George O'Brien. Novel "The Untamed" by Max Brand. Fox. 7 reels.

WESTERN melodrama set amid beautiful scenery. The story is fairly thrilling and animal lovers will enjoy the

picture especially as the dog and horse are splendid. *Family audience.*

Fighting Caravans

Directed by Otto Brower and David Burton. Starring Gary Cooper. Novel by Zane Grey. Paramount. 10 reels.

DRAMA of the pioneers crossing the country to California. It is an epic picture similar to *The Covered Wagon* with good photography. Tully Marshall and Ernest Torrence are fine in the role of scouts. *Family audience.*

The Gang Buster

Directed by A. E. Sutherland. Starring Jack Oakie. Screen story by Percy Heath. Paramount. 7 reels.

GANGSTER melodrama in which a cock-sure insurance agent with a breezy Western manner and a lot of courage helps the police round up a gang. *Mature audience.*

*The Great Meadow

Directed by Charles Brabin. Starring John Mack Brown and Eleanor Boardman. Novel by Elizabeth Madox Roberts. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 9 reels.

A fine and moving drama of early days in Kentucky. Some very beautiful photography offers a fitting background for this interesting story which gives an excellent picturization of the hardships endured by a little band of pioneers during their journey through the mountains of Virginia and their settling in the meadow country of Kentucky. *Family audience.*

Illicit

Directed by Archie Mayo. Starring Barbara Stanwyck and James Rennie. Play by Edith Fitzgerald and Robert Riskin. Warner. 8 reels.

AN entertaining story of a modern girl's ideas relating to marriage, effectively told through the excellent acting. Although she has decided that marriage will spoil love, she consents to it in the end and finds happiness. *Mature audience.*

Inspiration

Directed by Clarence Brown. Starring Greta Garbo. Screen story by Gene Markey. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 10 reels.

THE inspiration of many artists and the toast of Paris, a woman finds true love only to realize her unworthiness. The portrayal of this part is as fine as is expected of Miss Garbo and the picture is well directed. *Mature audience.*

*Kiss Me Again

Directed by William A. Seiter. Starring Bernice Claire. Musical operetta "Mlle. Modiste" by Victor Herbert. First National. 8 reels.

AN entertaining picture in color with charming singing and lovely costumes. It is based upon the popular operetta "Mlle. Modiste," the story of a little shop girl who becomes a great opera singer. *Family audience.*

Little Caesar

Directed by Mervyn LeRoy. Starring Edward G. Robinson. Novel by W. R. Burnett. First National. 8 reels.

ONE of the best of the many crook dramas depicting the rise and fall of the leader of a gang. This film dwells more upon characterization than plot and Edward G. Robinson makes "Little Caesar" live. *Mature audience.*

Men on Call

Directed by John Blystone. Starring Edmund Lowe. Screen story by James McGuinness. Fox. 6 reels.

THE fine acting of the cast makes this an interesting picture despite the slight story which concerns a member of the Coast Guard, embittered with life. *Family audience.*

Millie

Directed by John Francis Dillon. Starring Helen Twelvetrees. Novel by Donald H. Clarke. RKO. 9 reels.

FINE acting and direction marks this melodrama of a woman's life and loves from the age of twenty to forty. She

resorts to murder in order to protect her daughter from a man whose past she knows. *Mature audience.*

Once a Sinner

Directed by Guthrie McClintic. Starring Dorothy Mackaill and Joel McCrea. Screen story by George Middleton. Fox. 7 reels.

A sane treatment of the wife-with-a-past situation and a sensible, realistic working out of the marriage which the lady's past threatened to disrupt, made so by the careful acting of Miss Mackaill. *Mature audience.*

Other Men's Women

Directed by William Wellman. Starring Grant Withers and Mary Astor. Screen story by Maude Sulton. Warner. 7 reels.

A railroad story built around the romance of a boy and girl with the usual third party involved in an intrigue to destroy the young people's love for each other. *Family audience.*

*The Painted Desert

Directed by Howard Higgin. Starring William Boyd and Helen Twelvetrees. Screen story by Howard Higgin. Pathe. 8 reels.

EXCITING and well done is this melodrama with the gorgeous scenery of the painted desert as a background. A young boy is found on the desert and two life long friends become bitter enemies over him but he is finally the cause of their reconciliation. *Family audience.*

Reaching for the Moon

Directed by Edmund Goulding. Starring Douglas Fairbanks. Screen story by Edmund Goulding. United Artists. 8 reels.

DOUGLAS Fairbanks departs from the costume play, the famous Fairbanks acrobatics are not entirely lacking however, to enact a role in a modern story of a Wall Street broker who suffers financial losses when he lets love interfere with business. Bebe Daniels plays the feminine lead. *Family audience.*

Resurrection

Directed by Edwin Carew. Starring Lupe Velez and John Boles. Novel by Leo Tolstoy. Universal. 8 reels.

DRAMA of the love of a Russian prince and a girl, founded on Tolstoy's novel which has served as a play, a silent picture and a grand opera. This version is interesting to compare with the others and shows a definite advance in Lupe Velez's career as an actress. *Mature audience.*

Scandal Sheet

Directed by John Cromwell. Starring George Bancroft. Screen story by Vincent Lawrence and Max Marcin. Paramount. 8 reels.

A gripping newspaper story with an interesting climax. George Bancroft gives a splendid portrayal of a newspaper editor who, sent to prison, makes good as editor of the institution's paper. *Mature audience.*

*Seas Beneath

Directed by John Ford. Starring George O'Brien. Story by Commander James Parker. Fox. 9 reels.

A thrilling story of one of the mysterious "Q" ships employed by the U. S. Navy during the war to trap submarines. A disguised schooner successfully lures a submarine into attacking it and then sinks it. A romance between the captain and a German girl runs through the plot. *Family audience.*

Two Worlds

Directed by E. A. Dupont. Screen story by E. A. Dupont and Miles Malleon. British International Pictures. 8 reels.

WAR time story on the Russo-Austrian front, with racial conflict represented in the love of an Austrian aristocrat for the daughter of a Jewish clockmaker. Dignified and important with excellent direction for the most part. *Family audience.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

Cimarron

(See page 11)

*Family audience.***Playful Pan**

(See page 16)

*Family audience. Junior matinee.***Rango**

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*Family audience. Junior matinee.***Sous Les Toits de Paris**

(See page 13)

*Mature audience.**(Continued from page 7)*

(2) reaffirm its belief in the education of public opinion and the extension of social organization to further such education, and

(3) reaffirm its faith in the community plan for the social use of the motion picture as interpreted and carried forward in the work of the National Board of Review and its affiliated citizen groups.

Mr. Eugene A. Lauste

WHEREAS, this Conference, in consonance with its purpose of studying all phases of the motion picture, and within the scope of its work of bringing to the public attention important historical data which adds to the sum of public information; and

WHEREAS, it is aware that Mr. Eugene Augustin Lauste has just celebrated the 74th anniversary of his birth and wishes to extend to him its congratulations; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that this Conference confer upon Mr. Lauste full recognition for his pioneer efforts in the invention field of the motion picture for his designing and constructing of the first commercial wide film projector called the Eidoloscope, for his invention of the "Latham Loop," an essential feature of all motion picture projectors, and most important of all, for his invention in 1906, of the first authentic method of recording sound and scene simultaneously upon the same film as revealed in Patent No. 18,057 filed in the

British Patent Office, August 11th, 1906, which constitutes the master patent of the sound picture.

The members of the Resolutions Committee were: Judge John R. Davies, Chairman, member, Executive Committee, National Board of Review; Mrs. Leon A. McIntire, Chairman, Eastern Division, National D.A.R. Better Films Committee; Mr. Weaver M. Marr, President, Jacksonville (Fla.) Better Films Council; Mrs. Hugh A. Smith, Chairman, Rochester (N. Y.) Better Films Council; Mrs. Frank J. Yeager, President, Cleveland (Ohio) Cinema Club; and Mr. George J. Zehrung, Director, Y.M.C.A. Motion Picture Bureau.

SELECT FROM THE SELECTED

THE NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES offers service helpful in theatre patronage and in building programs for special occasions through its ANNUAL CATALOG OF SELECTED PICTURES. The 16th edition of this Catalog listing pictures coming before the National Board during 1930 is available.

The new Catalog includes 695 pictures from the 1624 submitted during the year. These pictures are divided into Features, Cartoons, Comedies, Dramatic Skits, Educationals and Travelogues, Musical Numbers, and Phantasies, Song and Dance Acts. This will be particularly helpful in arranging balanced programs. In addition, all pictures are listed with suitability for the mature, the family or the junior matinee audience.

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To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

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To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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March, 1931



Chaplin Again (see page 5)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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Vol. VI, Number 3.

March, 1931

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Motion Pictures and the Labor Audience

The opinion of a member of the President's Cabinet regarding the motion picture is of general interest as showing the increased recognition being given to the motion picture today by the leaders in public life. We are therefore glad to present in this month's magazine the following from the address delivered by the Hon. William N. Doak, Secretary of Labor, at our recent Annual Luncheon.—Editor's Note.

I AM especially pleased to speak to the members of this organization because I am so thoroughly convinced of the value of the motion picture as an aid to education and information and in the field of recreation. We are all agreed that every effort we make, no matter what it is, should stand or fall by the approval of public opinion. We know well enough that without that public approval, nothing we attempt can succeed. I am sure that those who produce our motion pictures are anxious to conform to the views of this great tribunal of the people.

This motion picture is especially interesting to me because I have been made spokesman for the millions of wage-earners in our country, and because these millions of toilers are by far the most numerous patrons of the motion picture—for they and their families make up the great bulk of our population.

They, like those in other walks of life, enjoy good wholesome amusements. They are just as keen for entertainment and recreation. They are vitally interested in promoting education. But there is one point where the motion picture means more to them than it does perhaps to others. The motion picture is apt to be more nearly the sole theatrical entertainment of the worker. With the upkeep and education of his family, he rarely has the means to enter the playhouse and the concert hall. For his enjoyments, therefore, he must rely more largely on the entertainment of the screen. Thus the influence of the motion picture is greatly enlarged in his case, and its duties to him are the greater for this.

I remind you of this fact to give you a new idea of the importance of the screen. It is all the more necessary to see that the people I speak for shall have the very best that the screen has to offer in recreation and particularly in education. In reality the motion picture house is a tremendous school. It is a great force in the molding of our national life. The tastes of a whole people may be elevated if they see on the screen the best that can be offered them in pictures of human action, portrayed amid scenes that reflect beauty and refinement.

I believe the screen has already served as a great educational force in this way. The producers of our pictures are constant-

ly staging their screen stories in homes that reflect, within and without, the best taste in interior decoration, architecture and surroundings. Beyond doubt this has tended to improve the tastes of our people. It has shown them how beautiful the American home can be made. No one can have failed to be struck with the recent improvement in small home architecture that we have experienced in the past twenty years. The style of the small home has changed. Its furnishings are better. Its comforts are more numerous. And I believe the influence of motion picture has had something to do with this. Our people are only too eager to adopt new ideas and especially in the home.

The motion picture can also uplift our national standards in speech and conduct. Every one responds to what is noble and generous in sentiment and conduct, and if we see these things constantly spoken and enacted before us, we inevitably pattern our thoughts and actions after these examples.

In every way, the motion picture is a force entering into our everyday lives. And we are a people apt to be quick and ready to respond to these influences. So the motion picture has laid upon it, perhaps, the greatest obligation. It should recognize what a power it is for good or evil, and its weight should be ever on the side of good. I do not mean that we should all be "Pollyannas." We need to see the darker side of human nature presented, if only that we may recognize its evil and avoid it. We should all be concerned to see that the balance swings ever to the right and wholesome side.

As our modern life perfects itself, so that we produce goods with less and less effort and in ever shorter working days and hours, we are destined to have far more leisure to enjoy. It begins to be a problem how we shall best employ that larger leisure time. The whole future of mankind rests, I believe, on how well or ill we improve this opportunity. We are shortly

going to need a whole new education in how to make the most of this larger life that is being given us. In that education, the motion picture is sure to play a leading part.

The motion picture industry and particularly this National Board of Review are continually carrying on a program of education, through depicting a better community life, the value of civic co-operation, and the duties and obligations which are ever present under our government, both national and local.

That all our people shall enjoy equality and justice, along with satisfying and permanent economic prosperity, is one of our highest ideals. Thus unitedly we will continue earnestly to seek to bring about such a readjustment of present conditions as will mean unbroken employment for all our workers, prosperity for our people, and nation-wide contentment. In the fulfillment of these purposes, I am confident the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures can render most helpful service.

THE opinion that the movies as a leveling force will accomplish much which no other premium has so far is the prediction of Professor John H. Muyskens, University of Michigan, who says that America's speech will be uniform throughout the land in twenty-five years if talking pictures continue to develop at the present speed. Through this new movie miracle, he declares, the southern drawl, the eastern clipping of words, the broad "a" of Boston and the provincialism of middle western speech will disappear under the tutelage of the picked voices of the talking screen. Professor Muyskens also believes that the resultant uniformity of speech will break down sectional differences and, in further unifying the United States, be a major asset to national progress.—*Movie Makers.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional* and *Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR

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FRANCES T. PATTERSON

J. K. PAULding

CREIGHTON PEET

CLARENCE A. PERRY

WALTER W. PETTIT

HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN

JOHN A. THOMAS

City Lights

Written, produced and directed by Charlie Chaplin, with a cast including Charlie Chaplin, Harry Myers, Virginia Cherrill and Hank Mann. Released by United Artists Corporation.

SINCE Chaplin took to taking his time about turning out pictures, a new film of his, even if it is just another Chaplin film, is an event. For the years do not diminish this little man's stature as the greatest clown in the world: anything he does is exceptional and unique.

City Lights has been long awaited, with even more than the usual amount of rumor and ballyhoo preceding it. A big point has been made about its being a "silent" film—silent in the sense of having no spoken dialogue—a challenge to the talkies, a crucial event in cinema history.

It turns out to be a delightful film, not Chaplin's best but far ahead of any other funny man's best. Charlie is the familiar Charlot, going through a well-rounded out romance, with the inevitable pathetic ending. It is full of hilarious episodes and Chaplinesque wistfulnesses and braveries and gentlenesses. There

is nothing in it that quite approaches the gorgeous pantomime of the sermon in *The Pilgrim* nor does it evoke such yells of laughter as some of *The Gold Rush*. But it is a comedy such as no other man under the sun could make. Judged by the Chaplin best it flags a bit: it is almost too carefully done, and some of the gags have lost their old element of surprise. Tumbling into a canal, balancing unconsciously on the edge of a hole in the sidewalk, getting paper streamers mixed up with spaghetti—one foresees too clearly where the laughs are supposed to come in such situations. There is the Chaplin touch, of course, but it takes a pretty loyal Chaplin fan not to complain when two years or more of production yielded so many worn-out incidents.

As a challenge to the talkies it isn't very important. There is a bit at the beginning that burlesques the kind of sound that used to come from the screen while the mechanism of sound reproduction was in its earliest state of imperfection. For the rest there is no talk, but plenty of sound: practically any sound that comes handy except that of the human voice. Sometime this arbitrary elimination of the voice makes odd inconsistencies: why, for instance, do we hear the orchestra that accompanies a man's singing, and not hear the singing? The omission of dialogue, how-

BULLETIN

THIS MONTH

Exceptional
City Lights
Honorable Mention
Father's Son
Ten Cents a Dance
East Lynne

PREVIOUS MONTHS

1931

Exceptional
Rango
Cimarron
Sous les Toits de Paris
Playful Pan (cartoon)
Honorable Mention
The Blue Angel



The place where Charlie saved the millionaire from suicide.

ever, is barely noticeable. No one ever seriously contended that Chaplin needed to talk to make himself understood, and he is too skillful a director not to make his actors as eloquent as necessary without spoken words. The use of music as an accompani-

ment of the action helps to cover the lack of dialogue, too—though the choosing of music is not one of Chaplin's happiest gifts. And by the way, does the credit line, "Music by Charlie Chaplin," mean some of the music, or all of it? The flower-girl theme has more than a striking resemblance to the "Violet-Seller" song that Raquel Meller used to sing, and some of the other tunes have an oddly familiar ring.

From the production standpoint this picture is probably Chaplin's smoothest and handsomest—it loses something of the old-time dash by being so smooth and handsome. The acting of the subsidiary roles is excellent—and here again there is a refining, ironing-out process at work. No more of those almost mythical creatures with inhuman moustaches and terrifying eyebrows and sledge-hammer physical prowess! Much of the atmosphere that used to give Chaplin films an air of being removed into a world of their own has been sacrificed for what passes for naturalism in Hollywood.

Even while laughing, one is aware of a faint and uneasy feeling that Chaplin has been pondering with more than a bit of solemnity on conventional story values, and it has led him further than ever into the realms of what is often called pathetic. Unfortunately the pathos in *City Lights* is frequently sentimental and mawkish.

Harry Myers and Hank Mann give comic performances that would steal scene after scene from almost anybody but Chaplin. Mr. Myers' "drunk" is done with a fine frenzy that doubles the fun of many episodes, and Mr. Mann executes his bit in the prize-fight with the skill of a virtuoso. Only the leading lady falls below the Chaplin level: she is hardly the flower-girl of Charlot's dreams.

Father's Son

Based upon the story "Old Fathers and Young Sons" by Booth Tarkington. Adapted by Hope Loring. Directed by William Bercudinc. With a cast including Lewis Stone, Leon Jauncey and Irene Rich. Produced and distributed by First National, Inc.

BOOTH TARKINGTON has observed the ways and habits of a certain type of boyhood with vast amusement and sympathy, and made many entertaining stories out of his observations. These stories stick pretty much to the surface of things, with none of the psychological probing and analysis that goes with most of the serious child study of the last few years, but they are very likely, in the eventual line-up of American literature, to be found on the same shelf with "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn." After all, Mark Twain, though he is now a classic, had similar reticences, and his pictures of the youthful scene went no deeper beneath the surface of manners than Mr. Tarkington has done, and "Penrod" in his twentieth century small city is as fair and truthful a representation as "Huck" on the earlier Mississippi.

Father's Son is not one of the "Penrod" stories, but it might well have been. It has the same qualities—the same sympathetic insight into the good times and bad times of the American small boy of a "nice" family, the same tolerant understanding of the bewilderment of such a boy's parents, and the same story-teller's gift for putting incidents together with amusing or touching effect. This particular story avoids the straining of plot that Mr. Tarkington often has to resort to, to round his stories out to the kind of climax that is conventionally supposed to be necessary — everything here flows along sim-

"The pleasure of film appreciation lies in the recognition of small developments, which do not often comprise the whole. It is rare to find a film that is in itself a step forward. Indeed, sometimes it is a reward to find one single shot in a movie which suggests an advance in the film's capabilities."

—PAUL ROTH.

ply and naturally with no fictional didoes. If any fault is to be found with it, it is that the cards seem to have been carefully stacked in favor of the small son: however right the father may be, the son is even more right. In other words, it is almost a "play with a purpose," the purpose being to make parents understand their children better. But few people will harp upon that fault as a serious one.

The story was originally called "Old Fathers and Young Sons," which fits it better than the title it now carries. The father is white-haired and stiff with dignity and importance. Not a villainous father, but one whose years and position have quite naturally made him forget what a child is like inside. The son is an eager, live, small boy, not especially mischievous or thoughtless but certainly not morbidly introspective

about his behavior and its effect on grown-ups or over-given to the self-consciousness that might make him calculate everything he did with an eye to its results. Spontaneous and generous—quite what one would want the nicest kind of boy to be. Circumstances make everything he does seem willfully wrong to his father, who has definite ideas about how willfulness should be treated. But the mother understands pretty well, or at least wants to, and she sees what the father's attitude is leading to. Eventually she takes the boy away, to give him a happy childhood. After a time the father, pondering in loneliness, has his eyes opened.

The directing of William Beaudine, and the acting of Leon Janney and Lewis Stone, bring this story to life with extraordinary sympathy and vividness. Leon Janney



Leon Janney disgracing the family by driving a junk wagon.

shows himself that rare phenomenon on the screen—a child who does not seem to be a child actor. Mr. Stone gives one of his customary cool, supremely competent, performances. Irene Rich verges on the over-sweet—inevitable in such a part. John Halliday is a doctor who helps set things right. He indulges in a good deal of back-patting and shoulder-squeezing, which seems to be the correct screen method of denoting sympathy and affection between male characters, but he manages not to be silly about it. There are several unusually good juvenile actors.

Ten Cents a Dance

Written by Joe Swerling. Directed by Lionel Barrymore. With a cast including Barbara Stanwyck, Ricardo Cortez and Monroe Owsley. Produced and distributed by Columbia Pictures.

AN O. Henry atmosphere of New York's middle-world—the millions who earn their living and ride in subways and are unobtrusive units in a vast herd—is what gives this picture its color. Its plot is trite: but what plot is not likely to be? Its characters are commonplace. What lifts it above the ordinary movie product is a simple and unpretentious genuineness, with a gratifying absence of customary frills for box-office allurements, and without any of the Tinpan Alley torch-song exhibitionism with which the ditty the picture takes its title from made a cheap bid for popularity.

This genuineness has its basis in the writing and the direction, but it is revealed most noticeably in the acting. There are people who will call the thing sordid, because the girl who works as a hostess in a cheap dancing hall, being a partner to any man with a dime to spend, is a slangy, gum-chewing young woman with an outlook on life that is thoroughly hard-boiled. She has a dreary enough existence, and



Barbara Stanwyck, a new screen actress of unusual ability.

it isn't bettered when she marries a weak-kneed fellow who happens to have all the characteristics of a conventional movie villain. Once in a while there actually is such a man—and this one is quite credibly *it*. The girl is too sensible to put up with him forever, and there is a happy ending foreshadowed in a marriage with a rich man who turns out to be not the conventional movie rich man.

Many situations that have served often in hackneyed melodramas are saved from tawdriness by Lionel Barrymore's discreet direction and unusually good acting by Barbara Stanwyck, Ricardo Cortez and Monroe Owsley. Somehow they make it seem that those situations for once were real. And the picture would be unusual if only for the reason that it shows what an excellent portrayal Miss Stanwyck can give—a portrayal that will stand comparison with the best that the screen has offered in a long time. She makes fineness and courage shine through a part that might easily have seemed coarse, and her emotional power is extraordinarily sincere and moving.

East Lynne

Adapted from the old novel and play by Mrs. Henry Wood. Directed by Frank Lloyd. With a cast including Ann Harding, Clive Brook, Conrad Nagel, Cecilia Loftus, Beryl Mercer and O. P. Heggie. Produced and distributed by Fox Film Corp.

HERE is a Victorian relic that has been through a modern factory, provided with fresh varnish and a new spring or two, and with some of its stuffing changed from one place to another.



*Ann Harding's return home in
"East Lynne."*

Not all the creaks have been removed, but it is a handsome article, and many a susceptible person will find it an excellent excuse for a good cry.

Fond rememberers of the old play will miss many of the situations that made the beloved drama so moving, especially the return of Lady Isabel in gray wig and colored spectacles to be the governess of her children. But the Victorian code is still there, the priggish husband, the smooth-spoken, black-hearted shatterer of the home, the sweet, long-suffering wife. It is an odd thing to find upon our screen today where, in spite of all the nonsense we endure, we do expect suffering to have some reasonable justification. Poor Lady Isabel let the sun shine on the carpet and played bear with her infant son and was therefore bullied and browbeaten: the lie about what happened in her bedroom was only a flimsy excuse for kicking her out of the house. The author simply and deliberately decided she was to be a suffering heroine, and any stick served well enough to whack her with.

Accepting it, then, as an outmoded example of what our forbears used to weep over, it is an excellent example, expensively made with beautiful settings and very competently acted. It has no relation to the modern cinema beyond being photographed by a motion picture camera, any more than it has any relation to modern human behavior. The thing that saves it from being merely a quaint but inert relic of the past is the ever potent tug that a mother yearning for her child can give to the heart strings.

Ann Harding's loveliness and charm add to the potency of that tug. There are many scenes where she makes poor Lady Isabel actually human. There is other excellent acting besides—Cecilia Loftus, in particular, who does the jealous sister with a completely modern significance. The righteous husband finds his ideal interpreter in Conrad Nagel, and Clive Brook villainizes with as much grace and credibility as the author and director allow. Beryl Mercer supplies one of her familiar cockney sketches.

Book Notes

The Film Till Now— A Survey of the Cinema

By PAUL ROTH

Reviewed by James Shelley Hamilton

MR. ROTH is one of the more articulate critics of the cinema, who has been writing about films for several years in England. He is not the kind of commentator who uses movies as a means of displaying his own personality, making each review that he writes a little dress parade for himself. He is deeply and studiously interested in the motion picture in itself, as a unique medium of dramatic expression.

This new book of his is one of the most readable, and one of the best, that has been published on the subject of motion pictures. Two thirds of it is devoted to what he calls "Part One—The Actual." The other third is concerned with "The Theoretical." Under "The Actual" he describes the development of the film and the various forms of cinema, and then examines with a great deal of detail the American film, the Soviet film, the German film, the French film, the British film, and films from other countries. This examination is both general and specific, and manages to give some idea of most of the important films that have been made as well as to analyze growths and tendencies. The theoretical part of the book studies the aim of the film in general and in particular, the preconception of dramatic content by scenario organization, and the methods of expression of dramatic content by film construction.

Anyone whose interest in motion pictures goes beyond merely liking to see them will find a great deal that is useful and a great deal that is stimulating in this book.

Its discussion of film aesthetics is lucid and sensible. Mr. Roth hasn't much patience with the dialogue film in its present state—but his ideas of the sound and visual cinema show that he is not a blind devotee of the old silent film.

The book is illustrated with a remarkably good and comprehensive lot of stills from important films.

Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, Publishers. Price, \$4.00.

Talkies and Book Buying

JACOB OMNIUM, columnist in the British book trade journal, "Publisher and Bookseller," is optimistic about the influence of the talkies on book sales, and the arguments advanced are equally sound for the United States: "The probable effect of the talkies in relation to the book trade cannot fail to be, in the commercial sense, a favorable one. Inevitably, the success of the talkies is creating a great and growing demand for plays suitable for presentation through their medium; and it may be taken for granted that a fairly large proportion of the plays produced to meet this demand will be talking-film dramatizations of popular works of fiction, both new and otherwise. We have only to remember that every one of such film plays that scores a success is bound to create an increased or revived demand for the book which it thus presents in screen-dramatized form, in order to realize how useful the talkie may come to be in its effect upon book sales. It must not be forgotten, too, that many stories which have already been utilized for the purposes of the silent screen will certainly be treated afresh for those of the talking-film, and that this will help to give a new vogue, for the time being, to the books from which they are derived."

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

Our Conference in Review

(Continued)

Last month we summed up in this department the opening discussion session of our Annual Conference devoted to "The Community and the Motion Picture in the Theatre." Here we present a summary of the second morning session built around the topic "The Community and Motion Pictures for Children."—Editor's Note.

THE Friday morning session was devoted to "The Community and Motion Pictures for Children." Mr. Barrett in opening the session said, "This section of the Conference deals with one of the most interesting and certainly one of the most important phases of the work of community groups engaged in the social use of the motion picture. In bringing to bear a scientific viewpoint on the whole problem of motion pictures and society, it should be emphasized that nowhere is that viewpoint so important as on the subject of motion pictures and children, because we have been troubled ever since the beginning of the motion picture with a vast assortment of misknowledge, of unscientific thinking, with regard to motion pictures and children. Censorship itself has had for a basis the theory that you must protect the children from the consequences, the moral consequences, of looking at motion pictures."

Mrs. James A. Craig, of the Jacksonville, Fla., Better Films Council was the presiding officer and introduced Mr. Ashley Miller, Director of the Heckscher Foundation Children's Theatre, N. Y. C., as the first speaker. Mr. Miller said, "I am not like the proverbial minister who said, 'The movies are bad. I have never seen a movie, but I know they are bad.' I put in fifteen

years of arduous service in the movies when they were young, in the old Biograph Studio. While I am not in the motion picture business now, I am not unfamiliar with methods and modes of procedure.

"In dealing with children, anyone who has the child at heart as we have at the Foundation is obliged to take the motion picture into consideration. I am sorry to say that the trend of this talk is not a boost for motion pictures. That does not mean that I do not see good in the movies. As a director for so many years, I still have an absolute faith in what motion pictures could do, particularly for the young. It does not matter what they do for the older ones so much, but it does make a great difference what happens to our young. I do feel the motion picture has an affect on the minds of the young, just as any other experience in life does. It presents things vividly and in a very compelling way.

"I served the motion picture industry and my ideas were expressed in the belief that it was probably the greatest force that had ever come into the world for good. I believe that sincerely and I believe today that it might be. How far it is from such an achievement I do not think anyone needs to be told.

"I appreciate very much the wonderful work which this National Board of Review has done in past years and I am not leaving out of account the fact that I believe today, or within the last two or three years, before the advent of the talking pictures, there were some of the finest things done in the way of production in the motion picture industry; far finer than anyone of us could have dreamed of in the early days.

"The motion picture is an art, to my way of thinking. I am not so sure about the talkies, because they have not quite arrived at the art stage. Some of the big productions we have seen in the last few years are genuine art and mark the high spots of the industry. What it will do in the future remains to be seen.

"The industry today is producing a great many motion pictures and we at the Heckscher Foundation are showing very few. I will have to go away from that part of the story to tell you what we are doing and then I will tell you why.

"Mr. Heckscher has built a wonderful place which he calls the Heckscher Foundation for Children. That building was designed for children and it has over its door, 'The Children's Building.' Many people call me up from time to time and ask about it as though they thought the Heckscher Foundation was an orphan's home. It is simply a big boys' and girls' club, where young people can come out of school, which will keep them off the streets and give them something to do so they will be out of mischief. That does not mean that boys and girls are necessarily in mischief, but they have a superabundance of energy which ought to be directed and we try to help them direct it into channels where they will get a good time and also better ideals of life.

"We have membership of about 7,000 children who come from all parts of the city. About 1,500 every day come in there for out-of-school activities. They have game rooms, a library, a gymnasium, swimming pool and things of that kind. The dues are from twenty-five cents a year and up, which I submit is cheap enough. The Foundation is a charity and not self-supporting, but we found that if the children received something for nothing they did not care about it, so we made a small charge. We used to give them free shows but they did not come. Now we are charging ten cents and they come.

"In the Foundation building is probably

the most beautiful theatre in New York. This theatre with its wonderful murals is famous all over the world and people come from various parts of the globe to see them. It seats about 700 people. It has become popular so it is one of the means of income for the Foundation.

"I was brought there because of my picture and stage experience, to try and start something in that theatre so it would become what Mr. Heckscher had designed it to be—a rendezvous for the young in New York, where they could find something worth while to go to and have a good time and obtain some inspiration. The accent is always kept on the good time. I mean, we are not simply an educational organization. We keep the accent on the good times and in that way our membership grows constantly and the children come there and get something else, too.

"In most theatres, the parents take their children because they think it will be good for them. In the Heckscher Theatre the children bring their parents. It is like a circus—it is a good excuse for the parents to see something themselves. Our audiences are about fifty percent children, perhaps a little more than that. We have become something of a feature in the cultural life of about 3,000 families who are now on our mailing list, and I do not know how many more come by our box office. Our box office sale is just about twice what our advance sale is.

"Someone said to me, 'Would it not be wonderful if you could give a show without a thought of the box office!' I said, 'No, the only way that we can discover if we are giving the children what they want is by the box office.'

"We tried originally to schedule motion pictures among our matinees. But after studying the possibilities of the pictures for children, and after one experience, we did not do it again. I booked *The Lost World* which I happened to see and thought worth while. When I came to show it, I telephoned the company and they said, 'We do

not think we can get a print.' I said, 'You booked it for me. I expect the picture.' 'Well,' they said, 'it is pretty nearly out of print.'

Many Better Films Committees can feel genuine sympathy at this situation for they have all encountered it.—The Editor.

"We have a stock company up there because we have not been able to obtain pictures we thought would serve the purpose. In fact, I am constantly receiving letters and telephone calls for information from parents and from schools. I suppose sixty percent of them say, 'Have you something good for Saturday afternoon to keep them away from the movies?'"

"That is not a popular sort of a statement to make, but such is the condition which exists in the City of New York today. We are in a position to know what parents are thinking.

"As I understand this Conference one idea is to try to steer for better films for children in the future. The past is past, and whatever has happened in history, but there is something ahead. The question before the Conference is, What is going to be done about the motion picture in the future?"

"The pictures do not represent good Americans, good citizenship in the main. Many of them are in extreme bad taste. If they have no other bad effect, they show a child pictures of life which are not true, not real, and not worth while. I do not think they are a good influence under the circumstances.

"Some years ago I was asked by the New York Tribune to write a series of articles on the motion picture industry. At that time I made a point which I think is still good. While we are blaming the motion picture industry, in the long run we have to blame ourselves, because producers will not make pictures people do not want to pay to see.

"I believe that the mass of American people would like to see better films. The only way they can obtain them is through

the indirect method of the box office. That seems a long way around, but apparently it is the method by which we must work.

"There is another angle to that. If we want better pictures for our children, we must keep our children away from the pictures we do not want them to see. Most people do not do that. Perhaps you and I are careful but most people are not.

"The purpose of this Conference, I take it, is to form organizations or to stimulate the activity of organizations such as are gathered here, so that each in his own community will exercise an influence on the shopping of the public for motion pictures for children. I believe that if these organizations in each of these cities and towns of the United States really get on the job, they can influence public opinion; they can make a press of the town and women's clubs. I believe they have more power than anything else in this country.

"The National Board of Review issues a guide to pictures that are fit for children to see. I think that they are very liberal. Some of them I would not pass, but their judgment is good and it is safe to follow their lead. They know what they are about.

"That seems to be the means by which this work must be approached and while we are not serving that purpose in the work we are doing at the Foundation I do represent the reaction of a large number of New York families to the motion picture and to child entertainment. Our concept of child entertainment is that it must be entertainment first, and then the presentation of cleaner, higher, saner, better ideals of life through that entertainment. If it does not serve that purpose, then it is not good entertainment for children."

The next subject treated was one which is of importance in connection with a study of the motion picture attendance, but one which has been given only slight attention generally, that of the effect of motion pictures on the eyes. Dr. William M. Richards of the Better Vision Institute, a prominent New York physician, presented

experienced opinion on the subject: "A high school teacher in this city came to me to be fitted with glasses. He mentioned the fact that his little girl, eight years old, did not need glasses with which to read, had no trouble with her eyes when she sewed or wrote, but when she went to the moving picture theatre, she immediately has a pain in her eyes, red eyes, and a headache. He said, 'As she is our only child, my wife and I do not go to the theatre because we think it is mean to leave her home.' There are three people handicapped in that way simply because one child has eyes that are not adapted to the work they are called upon to do.

"It is a common complaint among people generally and particularly people in the motion picture industry that their eyes have been ruined by motion pictures. That is all nonsense. It is a good thing gone wrong. If there is no refractive error in a person's eyes, he can look at pictures for a great length of time and have no discomfort.

"A number of people have their eyes made uncomfortable by these mechanical cartoons, Krazy Kat and things of that kind, when they are not affected by the ordinary moving picture. It means that they need a pair of glasses simply for the movies.

"You will find many people who stay away from the motion picture theatres and thus lose the educational benefits to be derived, simply because the movies make them ill. Many parents keep their children home from the movies because of this.

"What is the remedy for this and in whose hands is it? It is entirely in the hands of the motion picture industry. It is a very simple thing to have a movie of a man with some test letters right beside him and who says, 'Can you see these from where you are sitting in the fortieth row? If not, your eyes are not normal.' There are many things that can be done to bring this important subject to the attention of motion picture audiences. There is nothing that I know of in the world that can spread

knowledge the way the moving picture can. I think you as Committees should use some kind of a slogan like, 'If the movies bother your eyes, blame your eyes, not the movies, and have your eyes examined.' You could put out bits of publicity in regard to it for it is important to efficiency and to happiness in the theatres."

Further report of this session including a question and answer discussion of the junior matinee will appear in the following issue of the magazine.—Editor's Note.

Kind Words on Our Conference

A number of letters have come to us giving gratifying comment on the Conference. We are happy to reprint some of these at this time.—The Editor.

"I should like to express my interest in the Conference meeting on visual education which I had the pleasure of attending.
—Mrs. Allan Abbott, Chairman, Motion Picture Committee, Horace Mann Schools.

"A word of appreciation concerning the Seventh Annual Conference held at the Hotel Pennsylvania last week. Personally, I felt it a privilege to attend as it was so very worth while. The addresses and round table discussions certainly were profitable."
—Mrs. John D. Cummin, Chairman of Better Films, Nova Caesarea Chapter D.A.R.

"I want to tell you how much we all enjoyed our Conference. So many things were brought up of interest to our work."
—Mrs. W. J. MacLachlan, Chairman, Publicity Committee, Cleveland (O.) Cinema Club.

"By far the best Conference you have ever had and I have heard so many good things of it."—Mrs. Piercy Chestney, President, Macon (Ga.) Better Films Committee.

"I cannot tell you how much the Conference will help me in my work as Chairman for both the D.A.R. and the Women's Clubs. I know I gained considerable new ideas which I am hoping to carry out."—Mrs. David C. Dibbell, Motion Picture Chairman, Connecticut State Federation Women's Clubs, State Chairman of Better Films, Connecticut D.A.R.

"I cannot tell you how much I enjoyed the Conference and Luncheon. I attended every meeting and found great interest in the talks."—Miss Edith Ford, Better Films Chairman, New Netherlands Chapter, D.A.R.

"It seems to me this particular Conference brought out more clearly than ever before all the aspects of the community work."—Mrs. Harry G. Grover, President, Rutherford (N. J.) Better Films Committee.

"I am still under the spell of that delightful three day Conference at the Pennsylvania."—Mrs. L. B. Heuermann, Chairman of Better Films, Eagle Rock Chapter, D.A.R.

"Thank you so much for the copy of the resolutions passed at the Conference. I enjoyed January 22nd to 24th immensely and learned a great deal."—Mrs. Harvey C. McClintock, Chairman of Motion Pictures, Bronxville (N. Y.) Women's Club.

"I do want to tell you that I think in many ways the Conference was by far the most constructive and helpful one yet, and as they always do fill one full of enthusiasm

and inspiration to go home and try harder than ever, my sincere congratulations."—Mrs. Leon A. McIntire, Better Films Chairman, Eastern Division, National D.A.R.

"I was much interested in the Conference at the Hotel Pennsylvania yesterday morning as well as the delightful luncheon which followed. I brought two guests with me and we were all amply repaid for the trip to town in the storm."—Mrs. James E. Morrow, Better Films Committee, Caldwell (N. J.) Woman's Club.

"Congratulations upon a most successful Conference and Luncheon. So many spoke to me about the interesting sessions and it was certainly worth while to hear what is being done along the lines of visual instruction."—Mrs. William H. Pouch, Better Films Chairman, Northern Division, National D.A.R.

"The Conference, I believe, was one of the most helpful ones we have ever had. Since my return I have passed on the help that I received in New York and am going to make a detailed report at the next monthly meeting."—Mrs. Alonzo Richardson, Secretary, Atlanta (Ga.) Board of Review.

"I want to tell you how much I enjoyed the Conference this year. The Friday afternoon session on The Community and the Motion Picture in Visual Education was splendid and I certainly think something can be done in Rochester with it because it seems to be what everyone is talking about."—Mrs. Hugh A. Smith, President, Rochester (N. Y.) Better Films Council.

"I cannot say enough in praise of the Conference. It was a delight from start to finish. How did you get so many film stars together? I was thrilled to see them not as shadows but in person."—Miss Blanche Spadone, Better Films Chairman, Mary Washington Colonial Chapter, D.A.R.

Special Film Subjects

“**S**AY It With Films” might almost be said to be the slogan of organizations today in the presentation of their activities to the public. It is an effective means, as it is far-reaching and graphic, carrying the subject to a much wider audience than the printed word or the speaker and doing it in a way that gives a more lasting and vivid impression. Two examples of films telling organization stories were shown to the National Board recently.

The first of these was a picture entitled *The Forgotten Frontier*, the film of the Frontier Nursing Service.

This Service was started five and one-half years ago when Mrs. Mary Breckinridge, voluntary director of the Service, and two other nurses went into the mountains of Kentucky and permanently established a center. There are now twenty-eight nurses and nine centers, including an eighteen bed hospital, operating in an area of over seven hundred square miles.

A cousin of Mrs. Breckinridge, who had spent many summers in the mountains and knew the people and the districts thoroughly, was asked to make a motion picture of this Service. She gave her services voluntarily and after studying with a professional in New York, went down last winter to take the first shots. The actual taking of the picture was as arduous and even as dangerous as some of the most renowned professional pictures. Over one hundred people, all volunteers, took part in the movie and every scene is an actual event re-enacted.

A Committee of the National Board of Review saw the film and were of one mind in believing it to be an impressive telling of the work of the Frontier Nursing Service and a means which could be wisely used in interesting people in this most worthy cause.

Arrangements have been made for the distribution of the film so that the Service

will be both publicized and benefited. The film will be loaned to any responsible individual or organization wishing to exhibit it, upon the following conditions: Application to be made to the New York Executive Secretary, Miss Anne Winslow, 63 East 57th Street, New York City. Express charges be paid both ways and a fee of \$25.00 for the use of the film.

A duplicate film, 16mm. width, may be had upon the same terms, except that the fee will be \$10.00.

Boy Scout Film

LEADERS in the Making may sound a bit preachy as a title in these days of catch titles but when you see this excellent little film of a day's activities in a Boy Scout camp you are likely to think that the picture possesses more entertainment than a purely entertainment film. The Committee of the National Board seeing it had only one fault to find with it—that it was far too short—for so interestingly does it tell of a day from the morning bugle call to the evening war dance around the camp fire that one feels that they would like to see much more than this picture gives. And you hear as well as see, for this is a sound film and the whoops of the boys in their morning plunge and the shouts of delight when it is time to toast their lunch around a fire on their noon-time hike, certainly give added value to the picture in supplying a lively naturalness.

The film was produced and is distributed by the Boy Scout Foundation, 220 West 42nd Street, New York City. It is on 35mm. stock as the distribution so far has been in the theatres, but plans are in mind for a 16mm. print. The rental of the film is very low—\$1.00 per booking—and everyone will want to see it on any day whatsoever but especially will it be appropriate for Boys' Week, April 27th-May 4th, and Child Health Day, May 1st, and it will undoubtedly be a junior matinee classic. Bookings can be made from the Imperial Film Exchange, 630 Ninth Ave., New York City.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

EDITOR

BETTINA GUNCZY

DEPARTMENT STAFF

JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

FRANCES C. BARRETT

HELEN CAHILL

THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIED INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

Al Yemen

Russian production. Directed by Vladimir Shneiderov. Amkino. 6 reels.

A picture of life in Yemen on the Red Sea. A travelogue in silent form. Unusual as dealing with an unfamiliar place. *Family audience.*

Atlantic

British International production. Directed by E. A. Dupont. Starring John Langdon and El-laluc Terriss. Novel "The Berg" by Ernest Reynolds. Columbia. 8 reels.

THE entire action of this film covers two or three hours on the S.S. Atlantic depicting the great liner hit by an iceberg, the subsequent sinking and the heart-rending separation of the passengers. The picture is excellently done and holds the interest. *Mature audience.*

Body and Soul

Directed by Alfred Santell. Starring Charles Farrell and Elissa Landi. Novel "Squadrons" by Elliott S. White and A. E. Thomas. Fox. 9 reels.

A N aviator's story of the Great War with a surprise ending. Notable for the acting of Elissa Landi, a new actress from England. *Mature audience.*

The Conquering Horde

Directed by Edward Sloman. Starring Richard Arlen and Fay Wray. Novel by Emerson Hough. Paramount. 8 reels.

ROMANCE of the West following the Civil War. With no railroads within hundreds of miles of their ranches the Texans have to undergo many hardships in getting their cattle to market. Beautiful scenery adds to the picture. *Family audience.*

Don't Bet On Women

Directed by William K. Howard. Starring Roland Young, Edmund Lowe and Jeannette MacDonald. Story "All Women Are Bad" by William A. McGuire. Fox. 7 reels.

A N amusing comedy of a woman who is tired of being just a good wife, her husband who thinks she can be nothing else and another man who believes otherwise. The story amusingly tells who is right. The picture is marked by the finished acting of a well chosen cast. *Family audience.*

Dracula

Directed by Tod Browning. Starring Bela Lugosi. Novel by Bram Stoker. Universal. 9 reels.

A unique although gruesome picture based on the well known novel which concerns the fiendish crimes of a vampire, "Count Dracula," who nightly preys upon the lives of the innocent in his need for human blood. Bela Lugosi in the title role repeats his brilliant stage performance. *Mature audience.*

The Drums of Jeopardy

Directed by George B. Seitz. Starring Warner Oland. Novel by Howard MacGrath. Tiffany. 8 reels.

FINE entertainment for those who like murders, weird characters and clutching hands in their pictures. Warner Oland does his usual work as the evil doctor who swears vengeance on a royal Russian family who caused the death of his daughter. *Mature audience.*

Finn and Hattie

Directed by Norman Taurog and Norman McLeod. Starring Leon Errol, Zasu Pitts and Mitzi Green. Novel "Mr. and Mrs. Haddock Abroad" by Donald Ogden Stewart. Paramount. 8 reels.

AN amusing comedy in which the Haddocks take a trip abroad and little Mildred Haddock has her hands full getting her small cousin in trouble and trying to keep her father out of trouble. *Mature audience.*

Gentleman's Fate

Directed by Mervyn Leroy. Starring John Gilbert, Louis Wolheim and Leila Hyams. Screen story by Ursula Parrott. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 10 reels.

AN effective melodrama in which the hero, brought up as a gentleman, finds he is the son of a bootlegger and becomes involved in a gangsters' war. John Gilbert's best talkie so far. *Mature audience.*

Honor Among Lovers

Directed by Dorothy Arzner. Starring Claudette Colbert and Fredric March. Story by Austin Parker. Paramount. 8 reels.

A social drama depicting the story of a girl who is loved by her employer and the resulting circumstances. The picture is well directed and acted and the dialogue is good. *Mature audience.*

Hot Heiress

Directed by Clarence Badger. Starring Ona Munson and Ben Lyon. Screen story by Fields, Rogers and Hart. First National. 8 reels.

COMEDY drama of a wealthy girl who falls in love with a riveter and her family's reaction to her choice. *Family audience.*

It Pays to Advertise

Directed by Frank Tuttle. Starring Norman Foster and Carole Lombard. Play by Walter Hackett and Roi Cooper Megrue. Paramount. 7 reels.

AN amusing story of a wealthy youth who is disinherited, because his father does not approve of his fiancée, and his method of revenge which is starting a rival soap factory. Good cast including Lucien Littlefield, Skeets Gallagher and others. *Family audience.*

Kiki

Directed by Sam Taylor. Starring Mary Pickford and Reginald Denny. Play by David Belasco. United Artists. 8 reels.

FARCE-COMEDY of a little French chorus girl who though a failure on the stage succeeds through a fighting temper and a vivid imagination in winning the man she loves from her rival. Miss Pickford displays a versatile acting ability in a part new to her and the film holds hilarious comedy. *Family audience.*

The Last Parade

Directed by Erle C. Kenton. Starring Jack Holt and Tom Moore. Screen story by Casey Robinson. Columbia. 9 reels.

POST-WAR drama of two men who return from the front—one finds his job waiting for him but the other finds no employment. *Mature audience.*

Love In the Ring

German production. Starring Max Schmelling. Allart. 8 reels.

A German talking-film, re-edited with English titles and some English dialogue. The story tells of the rise of a world champion and is interesting for fight fans as it features the world's champion. *Family audience.*

The Man From Chicago

British International production. Columbia. 8 reels.

AN exciting story of crime detection concerning the operations of a Chicago gunman in England. Interesting for those who like the detective type of film. *Mature audience.*

My Past

Directed by Roy del Ruth. Starring Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon. Based on novel "Ex-mistress"-Anonymous. Warner. 7 reels.

AN interesting story of an actress who falls in love with a young man but realizing it will not mean happiness for them sends him away. *Mature audience.*

Not Exactly Gentlemen

Directed by Benjamin Stoloff. Starring Victor McLaglen. Story "Over the Border" by Herman Whittaker. Fox. 6 reels.

EXCITING Western melodrama with beautiful scenery in which three bad men help a girl against her enemies during the Dakota land rush. *Family audience.*

Povero Cuore (Poor Heart)

Italian production. Directed by Henry Otto. Starring Mona Rico and Beniamino Ingenito. Screen story by Beniamino Ingenito. Claudia Films. 6 reels.

AN Argentine romance. The niece of a wealthy ranch owner falls in love with a gaucho and although their lives are far apart love finds a way. *Mature audience.*

*The Prodigal

Directed by Harry Pollard. Starring Lawrence Tibbett. Screen story by Bess Meredith and Wells Root. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 8 reels.

THE son of an old Southern family becomes a tramp partly through some undisclosed villainy on the part of his brother. He drops casually in at home and finds much discord in his family which he attempts to settle, assisted by his mother.

The barbecue sequence with the singing of spirituals by Mr. Tibbett and a negro chorus is very appealing. Emma Dunn and Roland Young are excellent in their parts. *Family audience.*

The Right of Way

Directed by Frank Lloyd. Starring Conrad Nagel. Story by Sir Gilbert Parker. First National. 7 reels.

A clever lawyer loses his memory as the result of a hard fought case and is taken to a lumber camp to live in the great outdoors. His strong sense of what is right keeps him from realizing his dreams. The acting of Mr. Nagel is excellent. *Family audience.*

Sit Tight

Directed by Lloyd Bacon. Starring Winnie Lightner and Joe E. Brown. Screen story by William K. Wells. Warner. 8 reels.

VERY amusing comedy of a girl who runs a health farm. She trains a youth for a wrestling match and has all her hopes on his winning but there are surprises for her. *Family audience.*

*Stampede

Directed and photographed by Major and Mrs. Court Treatt and Mr. Errol Hinds. British International. 7 reels.

FINE silent picture of the African Sudan and the jungle. Story concerns the Habbania tribe—their quiet happy life in times of plenty and their hardships in times of drought. A charming love story, a tremendous jungle fire and interesting scenes of tribal and animal life make this an absorbing film. *Junior matinee.*

Stolen Heaven

Directed by George Abbott. Starring Nancy Carroll and Phillips Holmes. Novel by George Abbott. Paramount. 8 reels.

A well acted little story of two young people who are determined to get as much from life as they can and then "face the music." *Mature audience.*

A Throw of Dice

British International. 7 reels.

A simple story of old native days in India filmed in the original locale. The plot is that of the rivalry of two kings for a lovely maiden. *Family audience.*

The W Plan

British International. 10 reels.

A British intelligence officer posing as a German defeats an elaborate plot against the Allies. *Family audience.*

Zare

Armenian production. Armenkino. 7 reels.

SILENT picture. Rather commonplace story but the film is worth while for those interested in how the Kurds live, close by Mt. Arrarat. Armenian and English subtitles. *Family audience.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

City Lights

(See page 5)

Family audience.

East Lynne

(See page 10)

Mature audience.

Father's Son

(See page 7)

Junior matinee.

Ten Cents a Dance

(See page 9)

Mature audience.

SHORT SUBJECTS

Angel Cake

Vitaphone. 2 reels.

A musical show is rehearsed for the benefit of a prospective backer.

Around the Samovar

Paramount. 1 reel

Peasants sing and dance.

Picture Suggestions for Coming Days

THOSE sponsoring special showings for children will find many pertinent suggestions for Junior Matinee programs in the special days and weeks listed for observance during the coming months. April has in store American Forest Week, Arbor Day, Be Kind to Animals Week, Better Homes Week, Bird Day, Garden Week and Health Promotion Week. May celebrates with Child Health Day, Mother's Day, Music Week and National Hospital Day which marks the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. The National Board will be glad to assist in program planning for these special celebrations by furnishing lists of films especially suitable. For example, there is a most entertaining Western which the children would enjoy called *Roaring Ranch* that is eminently appropriate for Be Kind to Animals Week. The young people interested in music would very likely appreciate selections from the Music Masters Series during National Music Week. Recently two pictures have been released based on stories written by two of America's favorite writers, the boys' classic *Tom Sawyer* from the book by Mark Twain and *Father's Son* adapted from the story "Old Fathers and Young Sons" by Booth Tarkington, which committees might find highly acceptable as material for a Boys' Week program.

Believe It or Not No. 6

Vitaphone. 1 reel.

Curious facts and events cartooned by Ripley.

The Big Dog House

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 2 reels.

Another one of the dog comedies which is a burlesque on the many recent prison pictures. *Junior matinee.*

Birds of a FeatherSilly Symphony Cartoon. Columbia. 1 reel.*

A highly ingenious and amusing tale of the barnyard into which a hawk swoops carrying off a chick who is rescued by a squad of birds. *Junior matinee.*

The Brown Derby*Cartoon. RKO Radio Pictures. 1 reel.*

Toby the Pup takes up horse racing. *Junior matinee.*

Chickens Come Home*Starring Laurel and Hardy. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 3 reels.*

Mr. Hardy, about to run for mayor, is confronted by a lady from his past, and Mr. Laurel tries to straighten things out for him.

Cowboy Blues*Aesop Fable. Pathe. 1 reel.*

Cartoon with a Western setting. *Junior matinee.*

Curiosities Nos. 218, 219c*Columbia. 1 reel each*

Odd items about such things as liquid metal; how cats catch fish; a canary that sings a tune; hypnotizing a hen and so forth. *Junior matinee.*

The Dog Doctor*Starring Andy Clyde. Educational. 2 reels.*

A dog and cat doctor is persuaded to give up his business by his socially aspiring wife.

Dogs of Solitude*Vagabond Adventures Series. Pathe. 1 reel.*

Tom Terriss visits Switzerland photographing skiing, mountain climbing and St. Bernard dogs rescuing lost travelers. *Junior matinee.*

Duffer Swings*Golf Series. Pathe. 1 reel.*

Second lesson in Johnny Farrell's golf series. *Junior matinee.*

The Explorer*Cartoon. Educational. 1 reel.*

The Old Man goes to the North Pole. *Junior matinee.*

Fore*Golf Series. Pathe. 1 reel.*

Johnny Farrell's lessons in golf. *Junior matinee.*

The FrogSecrets of Nature Series. British International. 1 reel.*

A fascinating film showing the development of the frog with some fine microscopic shots. *Junior matinee.*

The Home of the Sheik*Rambling Reporter Series. Columbia. 1 reel.*

A trip to Algeria shows the life and customs of the sheik. *Junior matinee.*

Honeymoon Land*Educational. 1 reel.*

A travelogue in color depicting Hawaii—the Black Beach and Waikiki.

In the Rough*Golf Series. Pathe. 1 reel.*

Johnny Farrell shows the importance of using the niblick. An entertaining and instructive picture of golf. *Junior matinee.*

Masquerade*Starring Vivienne Osborn. Vitaphone. 2 reels.*

Dramatic story of Mardi Gras—a cabaret girl finds love. *Mature audience.*

Moonlight and Romance*Paramount. 1 reel.*

Entertaining singing and dancing act.

My West*Robert Bruce Scenic. Paramount. 1 reel.*

The beauties of the mountains, valleys, rivers, forests and coastline of the West excellently photographed. *Junior matinee.*

Pathe Audio Review Nos. 7-8*Pathe. 1 reel each. Junior matinee.*

Pete and Repeat

Starring Seben 'n' Leben. Educational. 2 reels.

Two blacksmiths are fooled by a pair of escaped convicts but accidentally capture them and win the reward.

Quack Quack

Cartoon. Educational. 1 reel.

Animated cartoon about birds.

Radio Racket

Aesop Fable. Pathe. 1 reel.

An amusing cartoon of animals broadcasting. *Junior matinee.*

Razzberries

Terry-Toons. Educational. 1 reel.

An animated cartoon above the average. *Junior matinee.*

Revenge is Sweet

Vitaphone. 2 reels.

An old time melodrama on a show boat.

The Roof of Europe

Rambling Reporter Series. Columbia. 1 reel.

The Rambling Reporter shows us the lofty Alps. *Junior matinee.*

*The Ship's Concert

Starring Giovanni Martinelli. Vitaphone. 1 reel.

Martinelli signs "The Song of Songs" and "Homing."

Shipwreck

Oswald Cartoon. Universal. 1 reel.

Oswald is shipwrecked and goes to the bottom of the sea where he gets into plenty of trouble with the fish. *Junior matinee.*

The Shooting of Dan the Duck

Starring Clyde Cook. Educational. 2 reels.

The troubles of a man who brings home a live turkey for dinner. *Junior matinee.*

Ski Pilots

Sportlight Series. Pathe. 1 reel.

Sand skiing in Southern California, snow skiing at Lake Placid, and water skiing in Florida. *Junior matinee.*

Strange Birds

Educational. 1 reel.

Excellent picture in color of birds with a particularly amusing parrot incident made at the Cataline aviaries. *Junior matinee.*

Teacher's Pest

Cartoon. Paramount. 1 reel.

Bimbo peps up the school and has a good time doing it. *Junior matinee.*

Tigers of the Deep

Sportlight Series. Pathe. 1 reel.

Deep sea fishing off the coast of Miami. *Junior matinee.*

Tree Saps

Cartoon. Paramount. 1 reel.

Bimbo determines to be a forester. *Junior matinee.*

The Village Smitty

Cartoon. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 1 reel.

Flip the Frog turns blacksmith. *Junior matinee.*

The Well of Fortaleza

Vagabond Adventures Series. Pathe. 1 reel.

Tom Terriss visits the old prisons in Porto Rico including the poison well of Fortaleza. *Junior matinee.*

The Zuyder Zee

Vagabond Adventures Series. Pathe. 1 reel.

Tom Terriss pictures the quaint sights of Holland. *Junior matinee.*

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To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

The Better Films National Council as an aid in carrying out these purposes furnishes an information service through its various publications.

Please use the coupon below and write for the publications you yourself would like or would like to have sent to interested friends.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. VI, No. 4



April, 1931



A trench scene from "Comrades of 1918" (see page 7)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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April, 1931

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Introducing Our Chairman

THE election of Judge John R. Davies to the Chairmanship of the National Board of Review, to succeed Dr. Walter W. Pettit, is herewith announced to our readers. Judge Davies has served for several years on the National Board's Executive Committee, and has been prominent in the affairs of the organization.

Judge Davies was for many years a justice in the Municipal Court of New York City. He was elected to the municipal bench in 1907. Before his election he served four years on the Board of Aldermen, during which time he was chairman of the finance committee. In 1923 Governor Smith appointed him as one of two judges to recommend legislation for the improvement of the administration of the Municipal Court. Since his retirement from the bench after twenty years service thereon, he has resumed the practise of the law.

One of the reasons which first interested

Judge Davies in the work of the National Board of Review was his agreement with the policy of opposition to censorship, for he believes in a tolerant policy rather than one of "thou shalt not." In

his judgment the people are in the best position to know what they want.

As Chairman, Judge Davies says he is anxious to keep the members of the National Board all over this country active in upholding the best standards. We have in this country, according to him, enough statutes but not enough standards. Therefore he describes the work of the Board not as censorship but as maintaining standards.



Judge John R. Davies

Dr. Walter W. Pettit, whom Judge Davies succeeds as Chairman, is Director of the Department of Community Organization, New York School of Social Work. He has given valuable time and effort to the work of the Board and will continue to serve as an active member of its Executive Committee.

What is a Good Sound-Picture?

By JOHN ALFRED THOMAS

THE recent revival on the screen for a limited run of one of the first talking pictures, *The Jazz Singer*, is a reminder that it is about four years or more now since the picture makers have been working on this business of combining sound and dialogue with films. When speech was first announced as the coming thing in pictures the guesses about its future were numerous and wild, but as it became evident that speech was in to stay the most carefully considered opinions agreed that it would result in a distinctly new medium, that it would not be just a case of "adding" speech.

Since those days there has been much use of speech and sound, and a little experimentation with them, but after all this time it is still apparent that the possibilities of the combination have not yet been fully realized and that no one has used it with more than momentary effectiveness. There is still, as the saying has it, considerable room for improvement, but the work that has gone on so far has served to indicate the direction that the talking film will take in the future and it has disclosed some of the people who are quite likely to be leaders in that movement.

The purpose, then, of this article is to point out a few of those whose work in the field of the talking picture has been most noteworthy, to indicate others of promise, to give a few examples of the use of sound in pictures, and to sum up, in a very limited way, the accomplishments of some of the laborers in the cinematic vineyards.

There are eight directors whose work in the talking pictures has been distinguished and has given promise that future developments are most likely to come from their ranks. Four are on this side of the ocean: Josef von Sternberg, Lewis Milestone, John Cromwell and Harry d'Arrast (who is included on probation). The others are:

Rene Clair, Alfred Hitchcock, G. W. Pabst and Geza von Bolvary. The films made by this group during the past year include: *Morocco*, *The Blue Angel*, *Dishonored*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *The Front Page*, *Street of Chance*, *For the Defense*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Laughter*, *Sous les Toits de Paris*, *Murder*, *Comrades of 1918*, and *Zwei Herzen im 3-4 Takt*.

Then there is a second group, in whose work one may find indications that they have some idea of what they are doing, and from them may come other worthwhile pictures. Among these are: Ernst Lubitsch, Ludwig Berger, Clarence Brown, Robert Milton, Wesley Ruggles and E. A. Dupont. And, finally, there are those from whom we have yet, quite literally, to hear: the Russian directors, whose contributions will probably be of great importance, and a few others, such as Carl Dreyer (*The Passion of Joan of Arc*) and Anthony Asquith, who have not yet provided anything on which to judge them in the talking picture field, and Jacques Feyder, who has not yet fulfilled the promise that he gave earlier.

Of the chosen eight, Josef von Sternberg is a director who is obviously still experimenting with sound, but the pictures which he has made recently, *The Blue Angel*, *Morocco*, and *Dishonored*, reveal him as one of the few who appreciate the possibilities of this new medium. He realizes that sound must be an integral part of the motion picture and not just an addition and some of his experiments in the use of it are among the most interesting and possibly the most important disclosed. Though he suffers from a disproportionate devotion to pet methods and personalities, his work is well worth watching, in a very literal sense. His camera work is excellent.

John Cromwell brings something of the stage, something of newspaper technique to

his work, and his pace is far removed from that of von Sternberg. While the latter is being very consciously the artist and experimenter, Cromwell is just as heartily the good jobber, turning out talking pictures of lively distinction. *Street of Chance*, one of the few actual motion pictures of last year, was probably his best work, and *For the Defense* and *Tom Sawyer* were above-average productions, though considerably less important.

Lewis Milestone produced in *All Quiet on the Western Front*, what was regarded by many as the finest of the talkies, although the second part of the film slacked off noticeably. Like *Street of Chance*, this also was a motion picture and its production was an important advance. He followed this with the recently released *The Front Page*, an entirely different type of film depending almost entirely on dialogue to give it its strength, and here again he registered a triumph.

The fourth of the group, Harry d'Arrast, is included with the qualification, "on probation," because although he was noted previously as a capable director of light comedy, he had done nothing much in the talkies. Then he produced *Laughter*, a deft and able combination of dialogue, sound and motion, which turned out to be one of the year's best and most successful pictures. Although it has several shortcomings and does not represent the most mature work that he can do, *Laughter* marked d'Arrast as one whose importance, especially in the field of modern comedy, will probably increase.

Of the group across the pond, Rene Clair is the director who made the charming *Sous les Toits de Paris* (Under the Roofs of Paris), an intelligently constructed film which utilized dialogue and music and pantomime as they should be used. It was by all odds one of the most satisfactory pictures of recent years, and a worthy model in the balance it achieved between speech and pantomime. Over in England Alfred Hitchcock made *Murder*, a film important

for the unique use it made of sound, of which more will be said in a later paragraph. G. W. Pabst, whose beautiful and dramatic *White Hell of Pitz Palu* had been ruined by the insertion of Graham McNamee, wisely used sound himself in *Comrades of 1918*, a German talking picture which makes a worthy companion to *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

Geza von Bolvary, the last of the group, produced what is easily the most charming example of a musical picture, if one accepts the music of *Sous les Toits de Paris* as atmospheric rather than all-important. *Zwei Herzen im 3-4 Takt* (Two Hearts in Waltz Time) is now in its seventh month at a small New York picture house, a remarkable run for any film and especially so for a talking and singing picture in the German language. Moreover, von Bolvary's latest picture, *Die Lustigen Weiber von Wien* (The Merry Wives of Vienna), recently shown in Berlin, is reported to be even better than *Zwei Herzen*.

To deal briefly with the second group of directors, Ernst Lubitsch showed, in *The Love Parade* and *Monte Carlo*, that he is a sound-conscious director whose experiments will be worth noting; Ludwig Berger put life and motion into *Playboy of Paris*, intended primarily as a "vehicle" for Maurice Chevalier, and showed that he knew how to keep his camera moving; Clarence Brown, in *Anna Christie*, *Romance*, and *Inspiration*, has not quite managed to get going; Robert Milton used imagination in parts of *Outward Bound*; Wesley Ruggles painted a vivid panorama of empire-building in *Cimarron*; and E. A. Dupont wavered between excellence and mediocrity, with a little too much of the latter, in *Atlantic* and *Two Worlds*.

Reference was made to one of these directors as "sound-conscious," and the term might well be applied to others. It is used merely to indicate that the director is aware of the possibilities of sound and has made some attempt to utilize it beyond mere speech-making by his characters. With no

intention of going more than superficially into the matter, it might be interesting to note a few examples of the use of sound in pictures, illustrating the manner in which some of the intelligent directors have employed it. The examples are chosen solely for the purpose of indicating possible uses of sound and are not presented as the best from their respective pictures.

In *Dishonored*, for example, a spy copies a long message in terms of music, commits to memory as much as she can, and is later shown trying to recall the notes at a piano, jotting them down as she goes. The scene fades out while the music continues, and soon the thumping chords resolve themselves into the sounds of that which they represent, War, and the next scene reveals the destruction of the enemy as the sounds increase in fury and in resemblance to the actual noises of battle. This is an excellent example of the use of sound to convey dramatic significance. At the end of the picture von Sternberg makes effective and dramatic use of silence as the camera shows the woman walking across the snow to face a firing squad, a contrast impossible in the silent films. There are also hints that von Sternberg is seeking something new in sound, to evolve a technique of sound flashbacks and overlapping that would be the equivalent of that done by the camera; that he is trying to find echoes as well as visions of the past to convey meaning.

In the earlier *Morocco* a French officer makes a speech of congratulation at a dinner which the host is giving for his fiancée. As the camera draws away the words become indistinguishable; all that remains is the sound of them and the picture of the people at the table. And yet, without the necessity of hearing a single word, the audience can see that whatever is being said is the right and appropriate thing. This is but one example of the use of sound and pantomime instead of speech to accomplish the same purpose. *Morocco* is remarkable also for its restraint in using dialogue spar-

ingly and only where it is a vital part of the picture; long stretches pass without any speech at all, and the omission is far more effective than would be the use of unnecessary dialogue.

From Alfred Hitchcock's English picture, *Murder*, come other ideas of the possibilities of sound. One of them achieves what Eugene O'Neill, in his "Strange Interlude," and other writers for the stage have failed to manage, a thoroughly logical use of the aside. The stage requires that the audience accept the convention of the aside and presume that the other characters on the stage do not hear what is audible to all the spectators. In *Murder* the central character is shown in his mirror as he shaves himself. Though his lips do not move the sound device brings you his thoughts as the details of the crime are gone over in his mind.

Later there is a scene in the jurors' room, with the eleven other members trying to convince him of the guilt of the defendant. As they surround him and shout their arguments at him, the voices become reinforced and cadenced so that eventually all seem to be hammering home the same point in a taunting, nerve-wracking sing-song rhythm. This is the impressionism that is infinitely more powerful than realism, and Hitchcock displays unusual imagination in its use.

Then, from *Zwei Herzen im 3-4 Takt*, there is something different again: what you might call a technical symphony. The preparations for a dinner are indicated by shots of wood being chopped, water boiled, eggs beaten, meat and bread cut, and so on, each accompanied by its own peculiar sound. These views are repeated, with more speed each time, until the whole mixture of chop and whistle and clackety-clack blends into a modern cacophonous song-picture of the kitchen, and the scene changes to a lavishly set dinner table.

In *Monte Carlo* Ernst Lubitsch introduces other uses of sound. A melody sung

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EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional* and *Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Comrades of 1918

Founded on the novel "Four from the Infantry" by Ernest Johannsen. Directed by G. W. Pabst, with a cast including Fritz Kampers, Gustav Diessel and Claus Clausen. Released by Forenfilms.

THIS, the first made-in-Germany war sound film to reach this country, has a great deal in common with *All Quiet on the Western Front*: it follows four men through their war experiences to their end, with a love with a French girl episode and a home visit episode. Though its dialogue is in German its action is easy enough to follow: only in some of the humorous remarks is one ignorant of the language likely to miss anything important.

The picture is made with characteristic German effectiveness. It shrinks from nothing that it wants to show—some of its scenes surpass anything the screen has yet had in the way of physically horrible sights and sounds. In direction it has real cinematic skill, keeping its sound and its talk in their proper place as helpers of the camera. In construction it relieves the terrific assault upon an audience's nerves—and the battle scenes are pretty nerve-wracking, in spite of all the training we have had in

screen battles—by natural restful interludes of quieter but no less poignant action. The acting is of the superlatively effective kind that the best German films have accustomed us to. And as a picture of war it comes closer to an uncompromising attempt to show the unutterable horror involved than anything we have yet seen.

Harry Alan Potamkin of the Exceptional Photoplays Committee, has this to add about *Comrades of 1918* and war pictures in general:

I saw this film in Paris. The post-synchronized French speech coming from German lips was not incongruous. For Pabst has spread the speech like a delicate gloss over the image, and kept the pitch of image and sound subdued to render them the more poignant. The suggestive quality of the film is therefore superior to that of Milestone's *All Quiet*, which was after all, a showman's war. I have previously called Pabst "unscrupulous" in his handling of subject-matter that concerns human experience. I was chided by the Pabst cultists for my inability to appreciate his "super-consciousness." Herr Pabst has not been vindicated in my eyes by that chiding. But his *Comrades of 1918* is more scrupulous, it possesses integrity. The hospital scene is deeper than the pain of young mangled bodies, it

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Matahi, the young hero of "Tabu"—a Murnau picture that has the naive charm of an old ballad

suggests the pain of a stricken world. Milestone had a superior opportunity in the episode of the boots of the dead "buddy," but it was not pitched or timed with ac-

curacy. And Pabst, appointed to compensate German production for *All Quiet*, following a narrative very close to the Remarque story, has surpassed Milestone

simply because he has forgot to remember Hollywood. Although Milestone gave us the best Hollywood could give us, it was still Hollywood—the Hollywood that overlooks the resonances of treatment.

Yet, I cannot accept *Comrades of 1918* completely. One dare not think of the single war-film without thinking of the war-film as a whole. What is the indictment of *Comrades of 1918*? A war-film cannot be evaluated simply as entertainment or an isolated production; it must be criticized for what it implies and what it omits. The implication of almost all the war-films is the attractiveness of war. In *All Quiet* and *Comrades of 1918* the soldier prefers the trenches to the life at home. In these films as in others the basic cause of war is not condemned, the blame finally devolves on the stay-at-home, in *Comrades of 1918* the unfaithful wife. This shifting of emphasis dates from Gance's *J'Accuse!* filmed in 1918. And in almost none of these war-films does one ever see the war set in the society that produced it. In the French picture, *Verdun: Visions of History*, despite "poetic" symbols and sentimental characterizations, there was a suggestion, if only an incipient one, of the shattered land, the uprooted lives. But in none of the films of the Continent and America has war been actually and inferentially explicitly and implicitly presented for what it is: the peak of a competitive society. Not to say this leaves pacifism passive, self-betrayed, playing into the very hands that yesterday manipulated the anti-militarism of *War Brides* into the malice of *The Kaiser the Beast of Berlin*.

To make the war the entirety of a film assures an ominous, therefore compelling, universe, however many words of hate of war, explosions against battle, may be uttered. Only the Soviet film has given the war its place as a peak of society, by simply making the war the climax and not all of the film, and by utilizing intensively realities as symbols. It is well to remark that the most drastic of pacifistic books, Latzko's "Men in War," used realities as symbols in

such a way as to render them unforgettable, but no one has dared to film "Men in War," eminently suited for the cinema.

Moreover, we must consider, in appraising any single war-film, what is the strength of this film's attack amid the ambient war-sentiment sustained by aviation pictures, war love-romances, and films in which war is a lark, even a slapstick fanfaronade. One must admit that despite its individual directorial merit, *Comrades of 1918*, rather adds a sensitive lyricism to the ambience than helps to dissipate it.—H. A. T.

Tabu

Written by F. W. Murnau and Robert J. Flaherty. Directed by F. W. Murnau. Photographed by Floyd Crosby. With a native cast. Distributed by Paramount.

MURNAU of *The Last Laugh* and Flaherty of *Moana*, two of the most gifted and most eminent of the directors who have tried to work independently of Hollywood tradition, combined to make this picture.

It is a silent picture: that is, it has no dialogue, but an unusually good musical accompaniment arranged for it by Hugo Riesenfeld, with some charming singing, that reinforces its moods and actions with fine effect. It has no subtitles, though the progress of the story is sometimes helped by the use of written reports and documents that are photographed as part of the action. All in all it proves—and much more conclusively than Chaplin's *City Lights*—that a good silent picture is as good as any motion picture.

The story is simple, and—it must be admitted—at times rather movieish. A native youth and maiden in the South Seas are about to be betrothed, when an old chief-tain comes from a neighboring island to announce the selection of the maiden to be the bride of the tribal god. The youth



Trader Horn with his gun-bearer, Renchero, in the African jungle

rescues her from this high but unwelcome destiny and they escape to another island, but the old chieftain follows them with sad but impressive relentlessness and in the end the maiden yields, to save the life of her lover.

The authors have divided the story into two parts: "Paradise," idyllic native life that seems like a dream of the lost youth of the human race, all free and happy and guileless, then the coming of the old man with his religious tabus, and the flight of the young people to escape them; "Paradise Lost," with the greed and deceit of money-making, and the united villainy of superstition and economic necessity pursuing the young lovers to their unhappy end.

The picture falls just as neatly into two parts of very good and not so good. The serene beauty of *Moana* fills the first part, a little bit stage-managed but still lyric and

lovely. In the second part the studied craftsmanship of *The Last Laugh* becomes apparent, not only in the manipulation of the plot but even in a certain theatrical quality in the light and shade of the photography that obtrudes itself with noticeable self-consciousness. In this part, also, there seems to have been an intention to bring in the effects of civilization as an evil force in the lives of the island children of nature, but that idea became merely a melodramatic incident in the spoiling of the lovers' Eden. The picture might well have been a more direct and satisfactory one if it had left out this element and stuck to its tale of old-time conflict between youthful love and tribal religion without any hint at sociological criticism.

Compared with *Moana*—and that inimitably unique motion picture is the only one with which it can fairly be compared—*Tabu* seems a bit contrived and forced, with a

perceptible breath from the movie studios mingling with its atmosphere of out-door naivete. But even after admitting that, it must be called unusual and far above the ordinary. It is a true motion picture, telling an appealing story by visual means, with a masterly use of the camera. It is moving, both to the esthetic sense and to the emotions, and it is singularly and rarely beautiful. No lovelier scenes have ever been photographed than the idyllic wooing of the youth and maid, the gracement movements of the ship as it sails between the atolls of the island, the race of the native boats to welcome it, and finally the youth swimming out into the sea after the little craft that is taking his beloved back to her own tribe.

It is a picture that brings sharply to mind what a loss the recent death of Murnau is to the art of the cinema.—J. S. H.

Trader Horn

From the story "Trader Horn." Directed by W. S. Van Dyke. With a cast including Harry Carey, Edwina Booth, Duncan Renaldo and Mutia Omoolu. Photographed by Clyde De Vinna. Produced and distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

TRADER HORN turns out to be a surprising and unusually interesting film. It retains, and goes it one or two better, all that was spectacular or sensational in the record of the romantic septuagenarian, Alfred Aloysius Smith, while eliminating a great part of the rough and ready philosophy of that sage, a portion of the book that made it so spicy and unique to many of its enthusiastic readers. But the picture stuff of the opus has certainly, as already said, been vigorously seized and added to and the whole magnificently upholstered with tapestry of African design in which all the animals of that bright realm and most of the natives, so it seems, appear woven around the adventuring figures of

Horn, his young friend, Peru, and the rescued white girl who had gone native priestess. This has made a movie, in the hands of Director W. S. Van Dyke, entertaining at every step, a movie that contains all the best features of a zoo, a cannibal dance, and a big yarn by Rider Haggard—or Trader Horn.

Not the least entertaining parts of the film are those depicting wild animal life, both sacred and profane—the former consisting of thrilling and gorgeous shots ingeniously cut in from various genuine exploration films, the latter probably imagined and manufactured in Hollywood. At the opening of the picture when we meet Trader Horn and his companion being paddled up an African river, we first encounter elephants, crocodiles and a whole community of hippos. The party leaves the boat and in a short excursion over land, during which the Trader casually discourses on the beasts and beasties of the African scene, and what is more points them out, we meet the most spectacular array of zebras, giraffes, wildebeests, buffaloes, lions, leopards and hyenas that probably all the hunters and explorers of the amazing continent, taken all together, have ever witnessed. It is super production on a super but different scale, and this gives the film a unique and arresting quality. Only when we come to know more intimately the savage white girl the Trader and Peru rescue, and grow swiftly conscious that she is making Peru's and the Trader's hearts beat a little faster, while all her savage years in the voodoo temple are slipping from her with surprising speed as she makes eyes with Peru and becomes just a young thing yearning for a good white man's love—only then do we begin to wonder a little whether such things really happen in Africa. But it still all remains enthralling, for the Trader, Peru and the wild white girl who has now become his gentle betrothed, are by this time being pursued by about as hideous a collection of rampaging natives as the screen has ever presented to our fascinated view, and these

bloodthirsty creatures seem somehow very real, in that strange way that Conrad made his people of the jungle real and made us understand the characteristics of their barbarism in weird graphic glimpses such as you get in parts, say, of that brooding and phantasmagoric tale, "Heart of Darkness." This native gang in *Trader Horn*, with their masks, clay paint, war-feathers, clubs, and spears, is something to run from, not only in the jungle but in the spectator's chair.

Seriously taken, criticism of *Trader Horn* becomes a bit difficult. Stewart Edward White, in commenting on African pictures in a recent article in *The Film Spectator*, defines what seems to be the clear ethical distinction between films purporting to be genuine travel visuals and those presented as fiction. "The former," says he, "should have no latitude whatever, not only in faking, but in mapping out genuine sequences by arrangement later. Every foot of that film should be what it purports to be, a picture of actual happenings taken in the field." Coming to the legitimate type of fiction film, he remarks, "It should remain absolutely true to life, as far as country, customs, happenings are concerned. That is to say, all of them should be of such a nature that they might have happened in that country, if in actual life they did not."

Thinking back over *Trader Horn*—allowing for certain discrepancies, such as that not all of the picture by any means was made in Africa, and that much is undoubtedly not studious in the scientific sense, just as Alfred Aloysius Smith was no scientist, and that magnification has taken place of what is probably true, and that the somewhat improbable white priestess has been introduced by way of providing romantic relief for those who cannot find relief in films without a dose of billings and cooings somewhere along the line—this colorful and ingenious picture seems to meet pretty well Mr. White's definition of what such a film legitimately should be. Somehow it has reality and that gives it

power—the power of seeing for the first time strange things in a strange land. And somehow you believe that people like Mr. Carey, Mr. Renaldo and Mutia Omoolu, who enacts the native gun-bearer Renchero, the Trader's loyal guide and friend unto death (at least as they appear in this film) actually did see, and adventure through, these strange things.—W. A. B.

Dishonored

Written and directed by Josef von Sternberg. With a cast including Marlene Dietrich, Victor McLaglen, Gustave von Seyffertitz and Warner Oland. Produced and distributed by Paramount.

DESPITE the fact that by now spy stories have lost most of their credibility *Dishonored* is an interesting picture. It is possible that no one really believes in spies any more; they have become legendary creatures, which is the first step towards the suspicion that perhaps they never existed. Even in the face of documentary evidence there is something unreal about them and their pretense to the reality of flesh and blood creatures is not accepted easily by the moviegoers.

Partly as a result of this, *Dishonored* is likely to seem a fabric of "hokum," especially when it is taken so seriously by its director. Each episode is protracted with fond care, the story moves slowly and ponderously, and the result naturally seems long drawn out. Furthermore, the picture concentrates on an actress and a mood, and what faults it has can be attributed mainly to the reverence in which Mr. Josef von Sternberg holds his own story, his own actress and his own mood.

To see only these defects, though, is to overlook much of positive value, much of promise, in *Dishonored*. For one thing, it marks von Sternberg as an outstanding craftsman in the use of sound and in the



Marlene Dietrich in an unusual bit of characterization in "Dishonored." The officer is Lew Cody

use of lights and shadows. Although sound and speech have been a part of pictures for several years there are few directors who have made of them more than an adjunct to the films of which they should really be an integral part.

Some of von Sternberg's recent productions have been praised because dialogue was so sparingly used in them and because without it there would still be a motion picture left, but to do this is to miss the point that his use of dialogue and sound is almost always an integral use and that it reinforces considerably the emotional and dramatic content of the picture. The fact remains that, despite its faults, the von Sternberg technique is one of the few intelligent approaches to the problem of uniting sound and speech with the motion picture.

In his story of a spy who, after many difficulties, finally manages to trick one of the enemy Secret Service, only to forfeit

her own life by setting him free, von Sternberg has written neither well nor wisely. The best thing that can be said for his story is that it presents a uniquely subtle sort of love, and presents it quietly. More interesting are the camera work and sound montage of *Dishonored*. The alliance of skillful director and one of the finest cameramen, Lee Garmes, results in a picture that is always a motion picture and always worth looking at. Where others skulk in shadows von Sternberg revels in them and the scenes at a piano and in dark cells are memorable compositions. The camerawork is remarkable for its beauty and its ability to convey a mood.

The most obvious use of sound in the film is that of making a piano almost one of the protagonists. It is used to project the emotion of the person playing, usually the star, and in one sequence it makes a transfer by which you understand that the

code message, written in music, spells the death of the enemy, a sequence ending in the sound of war. At the end of the picture dramatic use is made of silence as the spy walks over the snow to take her place before a firing squad. There are also a few



The struggle between Pat O'Brien and Adolphe Menjou which is the dramatic backbone of "The Front Page"

tentative attempts at experimentation, such as trying to find a flash-back device for sound, combined with an over-use of a worthy and effective device, the lap-dissolve, i.e., the process of letting the coming image grow in size and clearness through the fading former image.

There are other points of interest, like the reticent handling by which sound indicates a picture to you without the redundancy of showing the image also, but they are likely to be overlooked because of the weaknesses of story, structure, attitude and sense of drag which tend to obscure them. *Dishonored* is not a first-rate picture, but it is an intelligent and possibly even important picture, produced by one who has the makings of a completely first-rate director,

and acted with skill and restraint by Marlene Dietrich, Gustave von Seyffertitz, Warner Oland and, occasionally, Victor McLaglen.

What remains now is to recommend for Mr. von Sternberg a good story and a good scenario writer, and for Marlene Dietrich a new director, for while she owes a great deal of her success to this one, it is time to see what use others can make of her talents. And this will have the added value of bringing von Sternberg back to a realization that the picture is more important than the star.—J. A. T.

The Front Page

Produced by Howard Hughes from a play by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Directed by Lewis Milestone with a cast including Adolphe Menjou, Pat O'Brien, Mæ Clarke, Clarence H. Wilson, Matt Moore, George E. Stone, Effie Ellsler and Mary Brian. Released by United Artists.

THE stage has several times come somewhere near the kind of hard-boiled picture of American institutions that is represented so effectively by *The Front Page*, but this is the first time the screen has ventured to touch such a thing without carefully squeezing all the red corpuscles out of it before offering it to the public. Howard Hughes as a producer has respected the essential quality of the play and had it preserved, and Lewis Milestone as a director has had the skill to put that quality into a real motion picture.

The Front Page will be taken variously as a wild farce, as a love story in which something rather different keeps the lovers apart till the final fade-out, and as a sociological document. It is something of all three, with melodrama, satire and sharp incisions into the body politic added as well. It is an eye-opener and an ear-opener, visualizing things we have read of, but, with all the excess of gangstering and racketeering movies, never seen in the cinema before, and

letting loose such a vocabulary as the microphone has never before registered for public reproduction. It is amazingly ribald in humor, just as amazing in the way it grabs political figures and hurls them on the screen, and such uproarious entertainment that its force as a piece of social criticism may easily be overlooked.

Nearly all its action happens in the reporters' room of the criminal courts building in what is called a "Mythical Kingdom"—a locale easily recognizable to anyone at all aware of conditions in a certain mid-Western city whose name is spelled with seven letters of which the first is C. This action centers about the hanging of a man, and is principally concerned with the value of that hanging as news to the readers of modern metropolitan newspapers. Other aspects of the fate of the condemned man are touched upon forcibly but incidentally: its aspect as an example of justice administered in the interest of politics, for instance, and its aspect as an example of predatory victimizing. But the main emphasis of the motion picture is put on the loyalty of newspaper men to their profession—or, to say it another way, the hold the newspaper profession gets on its members. The "plot" interest lies in whether Hildy Johnson will be able to escape from the reporting business and get married—for it is made obvious that if he does not escape, marriage will be a quite secondary thing in his life: he will always be a slave so long as he works for Walter Burns and his paper.

In spite of so much of the action being confined to a single set Mr. Milestone has contrived to get outside often enough to create a sense of the life of a city rushing madly along providing "news." Of course it is a hectic life he pictures, drastically ignoring everything quiet and sane and normal, and he has done it at a reckless pace that gives the audience no time to reflect on what it is seeing. He has, and probably quite wisely, gone in for entertainment above everything—if he had

handled his material with a solemn regard for its significance in American life the result would have been shocking and almost unbearable.

One of the surprises of the picture for movie fans is the acting of Adolphe Menjou, who puts a drive and force into the part of the newspaper boss that would never have been expected from a player so strongly associated with suavity and nonchalance. The rest of the cast is as admirable as possible, which means that the men are highly colorful and the women mostly colorless. For the picture dallies little with sentiment and the sweeter things of life—it is made purely for stomachs of the stronger order.—J. S. H.

A Connecticut Yankee

Founded on Mark Twain's "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," directed by David Butler, with a cast including Will Rogers, William Farnum, Frank Albertson, Maureen O'Sullivan, Myrna Loy. Produced and distributed by Fox Films.

THE idea on which Mark Twain built his well-known fable, of transplanting an ingenious New Englander into the days and realm of King Arthur, has a perennial freshness that makes it seem good for an indefinite number of cinematic incarnations. Here we have it again, with a new Yankee and some up-to-date mechanical improvements, and dialogue. Very few of the Mark Twain incidents are left, but the Mark Twain philosophy—it is often called that—finds a pretty congenial outlet in the cracks, wise and otherwise, of Will Rogers. No one can complain that the old yarn has fallen into too irreverent hands.

Radio has supplied a new device for spiriting the Yankee from Connecticut back to Camelot. Once there, and in danger of the stake, a more interesting and credible means than Mark Twain's has been found for his making use of the solar eclipse as a life-saver. After that demonstration of magic

Sir Boss embarks on his marvelous career as the Henry Ford of the Round Table, with certain divertissements of the special Will Rogers brand, notably a rodeo act in the tournament. As in a previous screen version, the King and his band are saved from the villainy of Merlin and Morgan Le Fay by a wholesale attack of automobiles, reinforced by airships.

It is amusing entertainment, with occasional satire of not too sharp a tone, which could not have been produced by anything but the screen. Nothing else could have created those spires of Camelot and the tilting yard, which for brief instants bring a vivid breath of Mallory, or the Yankee's evocation of the eclipse, or the foiling of Morgan le Fay. Like most talkies, however, it chatters too much, and like all Will Rogers talkies it drawls too much. Mr. Rogers, with his Oklahoma version of the Yankee dialect, has a way of stopping all action when he opens his mouth, and unless what he says happens to be amusing he becomes the kind of drag that is fatal to a motion picture.—J. S. H.

Our Critics

THE recent reorganization of the Exceptional Photoplays Committee brings into our pages the names of some exceptional critics of the motion picture, who will contribute reviews of pictures chosen by the committee. You can see the new names at the head of this department, on page seven. Miss Barry used to be the motion picture critic for the London Daily Mail, and has written a book called "Let's Go to the Movies." Miss Gerstein writes about films for the Theatre Guild Magazine and also for the Boston Transcript. Mr. Peet is a former film reviewer for the New York Evening Post, and now fills a like position for the Outlook. Mr. Potamkin is the American correspondent for Close Up, writes about films for The New Masses and The New Freeman, and has recently

undertaken to do the same for Creative Art. Mr. Thomas, while still in Columbia, inaugurated the motion picture department in the Spectator, and was more recently one of the editors of Cinema. He contributes an article, "What is a Good Sound-Picture?" to this number of our magazine.

With these new writers added to those of its committee with which its readers are already acquainted, the NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE has a group of critics which, with all modesty, it feels is unequalled in this country.

Unusual Films in Cities

PEOPLE interested in encouraging and reviving better films often say that there is nothing they can do in a large city, such as New York, where there is no definite community they can work with. There may be an idea worth serious consideration in something that is being done at a couple of neighborhood houses in New York City. Every Saturday night, at 11:30, a popular picture of the last year or so is put on, followed by the regular feature attraction, constituting a new Midnight Show idea.

The pictures brought back in this way are talking pictures, rarely more than two years old, and what governs their selection is not primarily artistic value but the measure of popular success they enjoyed when they first appeared. Among the pictures revived so far have been *Innocents of Paris*, Maurice Chevalier's first American film, *Gold Diggers of Broadway*, one of the earliest revue-movies, and *Disraeli*, the George Arliss film that had so great a measure of critical and popular approval.

The experiment was first tried at the early show on Tuesdays, putting the revived picture on before the regular one o'clock showing, but the choice of this early hour turned out to be a bad one and the time was shifted to Saturday night. This has proved much more successful, and will be continued

(Continued on page 23)

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

Our Conference in Review

(Continued)

Last month we planned to give a summary of the session of our Annual Conference devoted to "The Community and Motion Pictures for Children" but we found that there was so much of helpful suggestion in the discussion period that the entire session could not be condensed into the space for one issue and it was therefore divided and this April number brings the second part of that session, presided over by Mrs. James A. Craig of the Jacksonville (Fla.) Better Films Council—EDITOR'S NOTE.

MRS. Craig introducing the next speaker said, "In connection with the motion picture and the child, I think the most common way of trying to solve the problem has been by sponsoring special performances that were particularly adapted to the children. Mrs. Piercy Chestney, president of the Macon, Ga., Better Films Committee, who is a prominent newspaper woman, is well known in connection with her work with the children's matinees in Macon."

Mrs. Chestney said, "In beginning my talks on children's matinees, I always preface them with this remark: If I had any children of my own I would do everything in my power to keep them away from the moving pictures, not because I feel as some people do, that the movies are very injurious to the morals. I would try to keep them away because I think a little child is better out in the open doing other things rather than shut up in a picture house, no matter how well ventilated it may be, after he has been in a school room five days of the week. But if I had any children I would

hope they would be normal children, and being normal children, they would naturally like to go to the pictures because they like to do what the grown-ups are doing. I think the solution for this is the junior matinees on Saturday mornings.

"Junior matinees, speaking from the experience that we have had, should not be under the direction of the theatre, but should be put into the theatre, rented for the morning, by some group in the community interested in giving the best pictures to children.

"You hear frequently about the problems of the children's matinees. The only way I think that problem can really be solved is to try to find somebody who is willing to give at least eight hours out of every twenty-four to the work of putting on the children's matinees. It takes endless work and endless patience and then frequently one is not satisfied with the result.

"In Macon, we have been having these matinees for almost eight years. The only time that we have failed to have a matinee was when the Saturday came on Christmas day, and then the children complained loudly the next week because they had missed it."

At this point Mrs. Chestney said, "I think that we can get a little more out of this as a discussion of the junior matinees. There are endless questions to be settled. Instead of my giving a talk, let me try to give the information in answers to questions."

We will print therefore some of the interesting discussions brought out in this question and answer period. The first question was, "To what age do you cater in

your junior matinees?" The answer being, "It is not a question with us exactly of catering to any special age, but I can easily tell you the ages that we have. We have them from babies six weeks old, wrapped up in bunny blankets, to ladies and gentlemen of ninety-four. We have just as many grown people as we have children. We have just as many high school boys and girls as we have little children. Once a month we have a program that will appeal almost entirely to the older boys and girls, and once a month a program for the tiny boys and girls."

Another question, "How do you secure pictures for your children's matinees?" Mrs. Chestney, "In a book I have listed practically every one of the film companies. Each one has its own page. When our reviewers in Macon review a picture, they are instructed to watch it very carefully, to see whether we can use it for our children's matinees. It is marked 'eminently suitable,' 'fairly good,' or 'with certain cuts it could be used.' As soon as that report comes to me, I turn to the producer of the film and list it. We keep strict account of every one of the pictures. There are some pictures we have used several times. That is because the personnel of your audience, when you have been operating nearly eight years, changes. We have just shown *Little Women*—this was the fifth time we have had it in seven years and we played to a capacity house. We had a matinee on the 17th of January, which was the Saturday nearest General Lee's birthday, given under the auspices of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. I wrote to the producer for the picture *The Heart of Robert E. Lee*. You have to go through an enormous amount of red tape to get pictures. After about twenty letters we got *The Robert E. Lee* picture. The print came from the New Orleans exchange and was shipped to Atlanta and then to Macon. One Saturday I remember we tried fifty-four pictures before we got one for the matinee."

Question: "Will you please tell us the structure of your organization?"

Answer: "We have eighteen or twenty active members. That group forms what we might call a board of managers. We have five officers and the chairman of the Advisory Committee. Six people form the Executive Committee. We have an associate membership list, as we call it, which is composed of a representative from practically every one of the organizations interested in this kind of work in Macon. In addition to this, there is what we call the Parent-Teacher Association Sub-Committee. We have motion picture chairmen in each one of the P.-T.A.'s. There is an active member at the head of each one of those associate groups. We call them chairmen of extensions at the head of associate groups and the chairmen of the P.-T.A. are at the head of the motion picture groups. Through those groups, we communicate with every one of the organizations in Macon about any particular picture that is coming that we think is at all worth while. Of course, the others we say nothing about."

"We do not have visual education in the schools of Macon, unfortunately, so our Committee does what it can to make up the loss. We issued a list containing 2,100 educational subjects relating to everything taught in all of the schools and sent it to several hundred teachers. Each teacher may request us to get a picture. We use it in connection with our regular program."

Question: "What is the plan of your program for the children's matinees?"

Answer: "The Macon Committee originated the plan of thematic programs. We arrange the program each week around some definite happening, preferably on that particular Saturday. On January 2nd, it was the anniversary of the raising of the first United States flag. The prologue that day consisted of a Boy Scout coming on the stage with a replica of the first flag. The audience sang 'America, the Beautiful.'

and the boy presented the flag. Then the organist played the 'Star Spangled Banner.' We are most fortunate in our organist, a fifteen year old boy. Before the matinee every Saturday he gives a half-hour program of music. If it happens to be the birthday of some great composer, he arranges his program from the works of that composer. If we have a silent picture he plays throughout the performance.

"Different organizations in town use the matinee as a benefit. We print a thousand tickets and pay for them. The theatre seats 850, but you know how children are, they like to sit two in a seat, so we usually have a thousand people there. We do not allow any more, unless we have two performances. We turn the tickets over to any organization that cares to use the matinee as a benefit. We, of course, control the program. They sell the tickets and get fifty percent of all sold. So an organization easily, with two or three days work, can make \$50. We have no division whatever of the tickets sold through the box office.

"At the conclusion of the matinee we deduct from the gross the entire expense of the morning, which runs somewhere between \$25 and \$35, according to the cost of the picture. Then we give the theatre fifty percent of the net for the rental of the theatre for that morning and take fifty percent and that is what we operate on.

"We own more than 200 hundred flags having a great many pageants where flags are used, and we loan them to the different organizations. On Armistice Day we used the flags of the Allies in a colorful pageant. On the stage there was a boy dressed as 'Uncle Sam' with a United States flag and four flags of allied nations. The flags of the other twenty-two allied nations were brought down the aisles and there was a constant pageant up and down the aisles. We allow the theatre to use the flags whenever they please.

"Every program during the entire year is built around whatever happens during

that week, and the main celebration is built around what happens on that particular Saturday."

"Do you have newsreels and do you have a comedy?"

"We sometimes have a newsreel; sometimes short subjects; always a feature. Occasionally however we have what is called a short subject feature week which consists of either a short subject and a song or a short subject and a dance. We try to work in a little bit of comedy in the prologue. For instance, on our 'Be Kind to Animals Week' program, in April, a little child will dance to the tune of 'Where, Oh Where, is My Little Dog Gone.' Each program is different. Of course, what a child likes most of all is a serial, but you have to be very particular in selecting serials because you do not want them too wildly exciting."

Question: "What do you find in regard to the children's reaction to the sound and the silent films?"

Answer: "It does not make a particle of difference to them. They are just as interested in the silent as in the sound. Children like to use their imagination. They will come from a silent picture and say, 'I'll bet that man said so and so.' The only thing they do not seem to like are the love scenes."

Question: "What size audience did you begin with and how long did it take to get a good audience?"

Answer: "At the first matinee there were twelve children and we were just as excited over those twelve children as we would be over twelve hundred, because we had been ten years trying to have matinees in Macon. Our maximum crowd was three thousand."

"How long did it take to work up a good audience?"

"They just gradually and steadily built."

"How long is your program?"

"We try never to let it run longer than an hour and a half."

"What is the price of admission?"

"Ten cents. We put the part of the program that will be of the greatest interest to the smaller children first, so if they become tired they can go."

"Do boys and girls of the upper grade high school have any preference between the sound film and the silent film?"

"They will take silent pictures along with the others, if they are interested in the subject of the film. I think a great many of the silent films are extremely good. We never hesitate because a picture is silent."

Mrs. E. B. Smith, Junior Matinee Chairman of the Jacksonville (Fla.) Better Films Council, in this regard said, "Children prefer the sound pictures, although if they are especially interested in a silent film or if it is an especially fine one, they like it just as well. Ordinarily, they really like the sound pictures best. I personally asked at least twenty-five children as they were coming out and about twenty of them said they preferred the sound pictures. The high school groups definitely prefer the audible pictures."

Question: "Do you find that your boys mostly want shooting scenes?"

Mrs. Chestney: "No, indeed, they are interested in other things. For example: we purchased a little film immediately after the inauguration of President Hoover, which depicted the inauguration of Washington and thought it would be an excellent thing to show the difference in an inauguration of many years ago and the inauguration of today. It was a silent picture. Then the newsreel giving the inauguration of Mr. Coolidge was shown with all the talking and the noise of the drums and everything. In addition there was shown a picture called *Our Presidents*. It began with Washington, showing his picture and underneath the date of his administration and then there was flashed on the screen the outstanding remark that he was supposed to have made during this time. It went right on down through Mr. Coolidge's administration. The children screamed and yelled from Washington right straight through,

they were as excited over it as if it had been a blood and thunder serial. Of course, their comments were most amusing. As soon as Mr. Coolidge was flashed upon the screen, for his remark they all screamed, 'I do not choose to run.' Naturally, that had not been selected for Mr. Coolidge to say but it shows how alive they are.

"Every now and then we do something like this: It was on the 17th of some month, I have forgotten which, that Mr. Coolidge made that remark, so we announced at a matinee that if any boy or girl brought in a slip of paper the next Saturday with his own name on it and the name of a great America who made a great remark a certain number of years ago that day, he would be admitted free. Well, the librarian said that the library was overrun the entire week with children who wanted to know what great man said what great thing on that particular date. Only two children in the whole town figured out what was said. The interesting thing was that it was two little children from the outlying districts, in a part of the community where you would have thought they had less opportunity than any other child to find out. We could not get them seated because they wanted to wait in the lobby to see if somebody else had brought it in. Incidentally, that sent a great many children into the children's department of the library and was a kind of education for them."

Question: "What effect do you think the jungle pictures have on children?"

Answer: "I have never discovered that they had any bad effect at all, because they have had pictures of animals way back when they were learning their alphabet from A for ape to Z for Zebra. They are accustomed to these, they draw them in school and study them in geography."

Question: "Are you told by parents that Saturday morning is a bad time because children must take music lessons, dancing lessons or cooking lessons and that sort of thing?"

"We heard it eight years ago but only for a few weeks. The music teachers co-operated with us and said they could arrange their lessons for some other time."

Question: "Do your adolescents object to it being called a junior program?"

"Not at all. They think they own the matinee just as much as the young children do. We started calling it the children's matinee, but it means nothing at all."

At this point Miss Sophie Smith, manager of the Little Picture House in New York City, upon request of the presiding officer, told of the interesting children's work there. She said, "The Little Picture House is different from other theatres in that it is owned by a group of people in New York who are interested in seeing better pictures. It is a small house with about 300 seats. We can do things differently there than can be done in other theatres. We break our program twice a week, Tuesdays and Fridays. We try to put in a picture on Friday for the weekend that will be good for children. *Tom Sawyer* is an example. But we do not in our regular programs, cater to children because it is an adult house. We have however a Committee known as the Little Picture House Children's Committee. This Committee sees pictures and approves them. They know nothing of the mechanics of getting pictures so I help them with that part of it.

Saturday morning children's pictures, one a month are conducted under their auspices, not under the auspices of the general manager of the house. There are two series, one for children under ten and one for children over ten—from ten to all ages. The little ones usually have short programs, an hour or an hour and a quarter. They like diversified short subjects.

"We have pictures for different ages, because what satisfies the very small child does not satisfy the child of ten. The children over ten most decidedly like sound pictures better than silent pictures, because they think silent pictures are old pictures.

They notice the difference in lighting and things like that. They are very discerning about it, too. We use both sound and silent because we have a machine to synchronize, and I think the little people do not know a picture is silent because the music goes along with it and they do not miss the talking."

Another interesting phase of motion picture activity of young people presented at this session was the review work of a Junior Committee. The Better Films Committee of Rutherford, New Jersey, has had some young people doing reviewing and it was Mrs. Alvin Herald of this Committee, in charge of the junior review work among the girls, who told of it. Mrs. Herald said, "The junior reviewing group in Rutherford has been formed to train the girls so that they will intelligently review pictures when they eventually become a part of the National Board of Review. When it was originally started however there was nothing like a junior review committee of the National Board in mind at all, it was just to help the girls select the films to see, because of course, they are going to see them. When they are of high school age, they ought to know how to choose, instead of just going to the theatre at random. The girls now fill out ballots every time they go to the movies and they have meetings once or twice a month, to discuss the films. The first part of the ballot is very similar to that used by the Review Committees of the National Board. The reason I have them fill out ballots for pictures that have already been reviewed by the National Board is so that when they do come into the projection room for reviewing and receive one of these ballots, they will know what they are doing. The second part of the ballot is concerned with audience suitability. Sometimes they agree with the National Board and sometimes they do not. The last part of the ballot has the question, Do you consider this a selected picture? *The Office Wife* and *Billy, the Kid* they did not consider selected pictures. They

thought *The Office Wife* was over-advertised and brought out the idea of divorce. Some of them had divorced relatives and they were firmly opposed to any picture that made it seem right to have divorce. The reason they did not select *Billy the Kid* was because they thought it made a hero of the murderer and they were opposed to that. They have very firm ideas about justice.

"On the reverse side of the ballot they make their comments and they are usually very interesting. They often miss some big point in a picture that you might think would be very obvious and some small thing either interests them or disturbs them very much.

"After the ballots are handed in and we have discussed and compared them with the National Board of Review Magazine and various lists they select the picture they would like to analyze for the day. They classify the picture as to type, tragedy, comedy and so forth. The one thing they liked about *Morocco* was the fact that there were a number of silences in the film. They notice things like that.

"You would be surprised at their reactions to the casting of the actors. They say, 'My sister is a college girl and she is not like that.' They are very, very particular about the people being cast in a way that would give an accurate idea of the life that is supposed to be portrayed. They take up the subject of voice and pronunciation and they observe grammatical errors with great glee.

"They object to misleading and vulgar titles, for the reason that their mothers do not always like them to go because of this when often the picture is perfectly all right, but the title is not. They feel very confident they can decide what is moral and what is not. They do not get any immoral effects from the movies they see. They do like to see pictures that encourage the better things of life and they always try to bring out anything in the pictures they have seen that has done that. Some of them

like the love scenes and some are very much opposed to them.

"By analyzing a picture in this thorough fashion, they know what they have seen and they know whether they like it or not and they have very definite reasons for this."

Many interested auditors were on the point of asking questions but the luncheon hour was at hand, our report shows the meeting adjourned at 1:15, and so the officer of the morning was forced to bring the session to a close.

16 mm. Films

THE National Board has recently compiled a list of the narrow width (16 mm.) films which we trust will be of some assistance to the many groups and individuals who have found it difficult to locate sources of this type of picture. The compilation, of course, does not list all the 16 mm. films but it gives an idea of the range of the subject, being divided into such sub-headings as entertainment films—features and shorts—and educational films including industrial, historical, literary, musical, health and so forth. By writing to the various companies whose names and addresses are included in this list, a more detailed and comprehensive knowledge of the 16 mm. field may be acquired.

The blank below is for your convenience in ordering the list.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW,
70 Fifth Ave., N. Y. C.

Enclosed please find 10c for 16 mm.
Film List.

Name

Address

What is a Good Sound-Picture?

(Continued from page 6)

to her by her lover reminds the heroine of him and when she hears the notes of a mechanical figure which emerges from his clock much in the manner of the traditional cuckoo, the few notes he plays seem to resemble those of the song, but in a minor key with slightly humorous variation. Making a woman in love recognize in all sounds the melody she wants to hear represents an insight on the part of Mr. Lubitsch that is not to be ignored. Also, as she rides on a train, the motion and the sound of the wheels and whistle resolve themselves into a song, and this seems to be echoed back by peasants in the fields they pass, a unique choral effect.

These few examples suffice to indicate what is meant by sound-consciousness in a director, and they may indicate too some of the possibilities of sound which have not yet been exploited to the fullest. There is always the danger, of course, that the sound will be regarded as all-important in itself, a danger which some of the directors approach. It would be well for all directors to bear in mind that what Pope advised writers many years ago, "The sound must seem an echo to the sense," is just as applicable today to directors of talking pictures.

Utilized as it should be, as an integral and vital part of the picture, as a means of conveying images, as a medium for the presentation of emotional and dramatic content, as one of the most important of impressionistic forces, sound has a future the possibilities of which no director has yet more than sampled. And if this article seems to lean too much to the side of sound, as distinct from dialogue, it is because the future of sound is so much more interesting and potentially important and because the highest product of the motion picture, as it seems now, is the perfect *tonfilm*, if a German word may be borrowed: the ultimate blending of sound and image and con-

tent that can provide what has been called the most powerful assault upon the emotions ever devised.

Do You Play Bridge?

THE Third Annual Bridge Party to be given by the National Board of Review under the auspices of the Membership Committee is scheduled for Saturday afternoon, May 2nd, on the Roof Garden of the Hotel Pennsylvania, New York City. The Patroness and Hostess Committees, under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Oliver Harriman, are very desirous of making this the biggest and best "party" ever, and ask, with this thought in mind, for your co-operation.

The prizes, given by the motion picture stars, will equal, if not surpass, those of last year and if you read the May-June (1930) issue of THE NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW MAGAZINE you know what is in store for the winners. Tickets are \$1.50 each-\$6.00 a table. If you are interested in receiving further word about the bridge let us know and we will gladly send an announcement listing the prizes and other interesting features. Whether or not you are able to attend the party perhaps you know of others who would be interested in receiving our prize announcement.

Unusual Films in Cities

(Continued from page 16)

as long as the box office shows that it is popular.

There is no reason why an energetic group that wants to put more emphasis on artistic merit, and provide a chance to see unusual films that have either passed their general-run stage or have never been thought profitable enough for a regular run, should not work with some neighborhood exhibitor to put a "Little Theatre" kind of show within reach of those who would like it without interfering with the ordinary commercial business of the theatre.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIED INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

BACHELOR APARTMENT—Written by John Howard Lawson and directed by Lowell Sherman, with Lowell Sherman and Irene Dunne in the cast. RKO Radio Pictures, 8 reels. Amusing comedy of a man of the world who finds it hard to explain all his feminine acquaintances when the right girl comes along. Lively acting and clever dialogue. *Mature audience.*

BAD SISTER—From a novel "The Flirt" by Booth Tarkington, directed by Hobart Henley, with a cast including Sidney Fox, Conrad Nagel and Bette Davis. Universal, 7 reels. Two sisters, one unselfish and shy, the other a spoiled flirt, and what happens when love comes to them. Well cast and entertaining. *Family audience.*

BEYOND VICTORY—Written by Horace Jackson and James Gleason, directed by John Robertson, starring Bill Boyd. RKO Pathe, 7 reels. Four Americans in the Great War, with flash-backs of how they came to enlist. The story is rather diffuse and the fighting scenes undistinguished, but it contains more direct argument against war than most of the more ambitious films. *Mature audience.*

CHARLIE CHAN CARRIES ON—From a novel by Earl Derr Biggers, directed by Hamilton McFadden, starring Warner Oland. Fox, 7 reels. Murder melodrama in which thirteen people start on a world tour and several are mysteriously killed. A cunning Oriental detective cleverly discovers the murderer. Well cast and interesting. *Mature audience.*

LE COLIER DE LA REINE—From the novel by Alexander Dumas, directed by Gaston Ravel with a cast featuring Marcelle Favrel-Chantal. Eclair, 9 reels. Made with the aid of the French Government, this picture has some authentic settings. Mostly a silent film, with a few episodes in French dialogue. Excellent acting, but rather long drawn out. *Family audience.*

***DOCTORS' WIVES**—Written by Maurine Watkins, and directed by Frank Borzage, with a cast including Warner Baxter, Victor Varconi, Joan Bennett and Cecilia Loftus. Fox, 8 reels. The rivalry between an attractive doctor's professional life and domestic life. Intelligently and dramatically done, with admirable acting. *Mature audience.*

FIFTY MILLION FRENCHMEN—From the musical comedy by Herbert Fields, directed by Lloyd Bacon, featuring Oleson and Johnson, Helen Broderick and William Gaxton. Warner Bros., 7 reels. Without the music of the original show this production in Technicolor has a crazy plot but many amusing incidents. *Family audience.*

THE FINGER POINTS—Written by John Monk Saunders and W. R. Burnett, directed by John Francis Dillon, with a cast including Richard Barthelme, Regis Toomey and Fay Wray. First National, 9 reels. Obviously founded on the murder of a Chicago reporter. A newspaper man, for no very credible reason, allies himself with racketeers and pays a tragic penalty. Often exciting but not often convincing. *Mature audience.*

***THE GIRL FROM THE REEPERBAHN**—From a play by Benno Vigny, directed by Karl Anton, with a cast including Hans von Schlettow and Olga Tschekova. Talking Picture Epics, 8 reels. German dialogue film, with the triangle theme enacted against the background of a lonely light-house, where a rescued girl comes between the keeper and his wife. Well acted and smoothly directed. *Mature audience.*

GUN SMOKE—Written by Grover Jones and William Slavens McNutt, directed by Edward Sloman, starring Richard Arlen. Paramount, 7 reels. A gang that invades a small Western town as a new field of operations finds itself fighting a cowboy who cleans it up. Plenty of excitement. *Family audience.*

HELL BOUND—Written by Edward Dean Sullivan, directed by Walter Lang, featuring Leo Carrillo and Lola Lane. Tiffany 8 reels. Another gangster melodrama, in which a man out to get his enemy is innocently betrayed by a girl he has befriended. Leo Carrillo gives a convincing portrayal of the gangster. *Mature audience.*

IT'S A WISE CHILD—From a play by Lawrence E. Johnson, directed by Robert Z. Leonard, starring Marion Davies. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. The spicy Belasco farce has been somewhat toned down for the screen, not too cleverly. It still hinges on a delicate situation. There are some amusing performances in it. *Mature audience.*

LAUGH AND GET RICH—Written by Douglas McLean and directed by Gregory La Cava, featuring Edna May Oliver, Hugh Herbert and Dorothy Lee. RKO Radio Pictures, 8 reels. A boarding-house keeper who has known better days and her soft-hearted but shiftless husband go through many amusing adventures to unexpected prosperity. Excellent direction and some excellent acting. *Family audience.*

THE LIGHTNING FLYER—Written by Barry Barringer and directed by William Nigh, with James Hall and Dorothy Sebastian. Columbia, 6 reels. A railroad story, in which the son of the president of the road proves his mettle, assisted by a girl. *Family audience.*

MAN OF THE WORLD—Written by Herman Mankiewicz, directed by Richard Wallace, starring William Powell. Paramount, 8 reels. Working in Paris on a scandal sheet, Powell falls in love with one of the victims of his blackmailing. Love lacks its usual movie power to reform, and he makes a thorough job of his extortion and leaves for South America. *Mature audience.*

MEN CALL IT LOVE—From play "Among the Married," by Vincent Lawrence, directed by Edgar Selwyn, featuring Adolphe Menjou, Leila Hyams and Norman Foster. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels. Well acted comedy of life in a smart set where divorce is the regular thing. Once more Adolphe Menjou gracefully fails to win the heroine from the hero. *Mature audience.*

MISBEHAVING LADIES—From a story by Juliet Wilbur Tompkins, directed by William Beaudine, featuring Lila Lee, Ben Lyon, Louise Fazenda and Lucien Littlefield. First National, 7 reels. Not at all what might be expected from the title. A mild but entertaining comedy, in which a princess comes home from Europe and has to live up to the villagers' idea of royalty. *Family audience.*

MR. LEMON OF ORANGE—Written by Jack Hays, directed by John Blystone, featuring El Brendel and Fifi Dorsay. Fox, 7 reels. For those who like El Brendel, here he is in double measure, playing two parts, a comic Swede and a gangster. The picture does not take gangstering very seriously. *Mature audience.*

***A PERFECT ALIBI**—From the play by A. A. Milne, directed by Basil Dean, featuring Frank Lawton and other English players. RKO Radio Pictures, 8 reels. One of the best pictures to come from England to America. Excellent dialogue and acting, in an interesting story of two young people who unprofessionally solve a murder mystery. *Family audience.*

ROSENMONTAG—From a play by Otto Erich Hartleben, directed by Hans Steinhoff, featuring Mathias Wiemann, Lien Deyers and Karl Ludwig Diehl, UFA, 8 reels. A German dialogue film, telling a rather sombre story of how the ambitious family of a young officer interfered tragically in his love affairs. Capably directed and acted. *Mature audience.*

THE SIN SHIP—Written by Keene Thompson and Agnes Brand Leahy, directed by Louis Wolheim, featuring Louis Wolheim, Mary Astor and Ian Keith. RKO Radio, 7 reels. In a rather movieish story not so lurid as its title, a tough sea captain is reformed by his mistaken faith in a woman's goodness, and she in turn is led to better things by his reformation. *Mature audience.*

***SKIPPY**—Founded on Percy Crosby's cartoons, directed by Norman Taurog, featuring Jackie Cooper, Robert Coogan, Milti Green and Jackie Searles. Paramount, 10 reels. An unusually entertaining picture of boy life, with a new juvenile star, Jackie Cooper, shining brilliantly as "Skippy." Jackie Coogan's young brother also makes his first appearance on the screen. *Family audience.*

THE SONGS OF ENSIGN STAL—A Swedish silent film, produced with characteristic Swedish pictorial beauty. It concerns the struggle between Finland and Russia with historical characters and episodes. Interesting chiefly to Swedish patriots and history students. *Family audience.*

STRANGERS MAY KISS—Written by Ursula Parrott, directed by George Fitzmaurice, featuring Norma Shearer, Robert Montgomery and Neil Hamilton. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 10 reels. Concerned with whether a woman can kiss and run away with the same immunity as a man. The dialogue is often pseudo-smart and the ethics are slightly muddled, but the acting is excellent and the story interesting. *Mature audience.*

A TAILOR-MADE MAN—From the play by Henry James Smith, directed by Sam Wood, featuring William Haines, Joseph Cawthorne and Dorothy Jordan. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. An old comedy, once done in silent pictures by Charles Ray, somewhat remodelled

for William Haines, giving him another role in which a smart-alec young gentleman passes through humiliation to extraordinary success. *Family audience.*

UNFAITHFUL—*Written by John Van Druten, directed by John Cromwell, with Ruth Chatterton and Paul Lukas. Paramount, 8 reels.* Interesting story of an American woman married to an Englishman, who almost wrecks her own happiness by trying to save her brother from disillusionment. Excellent acting and direction. *Mature audience.*

WIEN, DU STADT DER LIEDER—*Written by Ernst Neubach, music by Hans May, directed by Richard Oswald, with a cast including Charlotte Ander, Max Hansen, Max Ehrlich. Protex, 8 reels.* German singing and talking film, of the musical comedy order, full of laughs for those who understand German. *Mature audience.*

WOMAN HUNGRY—*From the play, "The Great Divide," by William Vaughan Moody, directed by Clarence Badger, featuring Lila Lee, Sidney Blackmer. First National, 7 reels.* Under an ill-fitting title the well-known play is brought forward again in Technicolor. *Mature audience.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

Comrades of 1918

(See page 7)

Family audience.

A Connecticut Yankee

(See page 15)

Family audience. Junior matinee

Dishonored

(See page 12)

Mature audience.

The Front Page

(See page 14)

Mature audience.

Trader Horn

(See page 11)

Family audience. Junior matinee

Tabu

(See page 9)

Family audience.

SHORT SUBJECTS

THE AFRICAN DODGER—*Paramount, 1 reel.* Tom Howard is persuaded to take the job of dodging balls at a side show and all goes well for a time. *Family audience.*

AIR TIGHT—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels.* Amusing comedy of a boy who is induced to try gliding. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

ALGIERS—*Vitaphone, 1 reel.* A modern jewel in an ancient setting. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

ALL FOR THE BAND—*Paramount, 1 reel.* Good jazzy music by Eddie Younger and his hick band. *Family audience.*

AMBITIOUS PEOPLE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels.* Technicolor act—singing, dancing and jokes. *Family audience.*

BARGAIN DAY—*Our Gang, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels.* The smallest members of the gang find themselves in a rich little girl's house where they unintentionally cause a lot of trouble aided by a monkey. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BELIEVE IT OR NOT NO. 8—*Vitaphone, 1 reel.* Ripley cartoons unusual facts and events. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BROADWAY ROMEO—*Paramount, 2 reels.* Comedy of a boy and girl who discover their sweethearts have deceived them, so they plan revenge. *Family audience.*

THE BUM BANDIT (Talkartoons)—*Paramount, 1 reel.* When a bandit holds up a train his wife appears and spoils his little game. *Family audience.*

THE CALL OF MOHAMMED (Vagabond Adventures Series)—*RKO-Pathé, 1 reel.* India, the land of the mosques and minarets, her customs and religious ceremonies. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE CAT'S PAW—*Universal, 2 reels.* A woman smuggles a bird aboard a train and it escapes and causes plenty of excitement. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

CHASING AROUND—*Tiffany, 2 reels.* The Tiffany Chimps in an amusing portrayal of family life. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

CLOWNING (Terry-Toons)—*Educational, 1 reel.* Cartoon about a circus. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

COLLEGE CAPERS (Aesop Fables)—*Pathé, 1 reel.* The animals go to college and become great football players. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE COW'S HUSBAND (Cartoon)—*Paramount, 1 reel.* Bimbo takes up bull fighting much to his sorrow. *Family audience.*

CRASHING HOLLYWOOD—*Featuring Edward Nugent and Louise Brooks, Educational, 2 reels.* A girl who visits Hollywood to get a look at its wildness discovers how mythical most of it is. *Family audience.*

CURIOSITIES No. 220.—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Entertaining exhibit of oddities from all over the world. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

DONKEY BUSINESS—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. A ventriloquist and his dummy ride on a donkey through the Grand Canyon looking for Indians. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

DUMB PATROL (Looney Tunes)—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Cartoon of the air patrol. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE FARMER (Oswald Cartoon)—*Universal*, 1 reel. Oswald decides to become an agriculturist. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

A FOWL AFFAIR—*Educational*, 2 reels. A burlesque melodrama with chickens, ducks and geese as the actors. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 reels. Vaudeville act in technicolor of singing, dancing and comedy. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

GIOVANNI MARTINELLI—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Well rendered selections. *Family audience.*

FROZEN FACES—*RKO-Pathé*, 2 reels. Comic misadventures with the heating and ice plants of a new house. *Family audience.*

THE HUDSON AND ITS MOODS—*Paramount*, 1 reel. A trip up the Hudson. *Family audience.*

HUMANETTES No. 8—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Marionettes with human heads and voices in a Siberian setting. *Family audience.*

HURRICANE ISLAND (Vagabond Adventures Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. The Vagabond Director shows us the Island of Santa Domingo, the ruins caused by the hurricane, the cathedral and the tomb of Christopher Columbus. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

M'LADY—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Irene Bordoni sings "So This Is Love." *Family audience.*

THE OLD HOKUM BUCKET (Aesop Fables)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. A farmer and his lazy animals get pep and the old farm begins to hum. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL Nos. 7-8—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Lowell Thomas shows us many interesting people and things including Rudy Vallee and his Connecticut Yankees; Ruth St. Denis in one of her most famous dances; Venice; the migration of the caribou and so on. *Family audience.*

PATHE AUDIO REVIEW No. 9—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Historic St. George, Bermuda; James Montgomery Flagg; process of metal cutting at the General Electric plant. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

RODEO DOUGH (Krazy Kat Cartoon)—

Columbia, 1 reel. Krazy Kat attends a rodeo. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE SHADOW OF THE DRAGON (Vagabond Adventures Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Interesting scenic of Mongolia. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SING SING SONG (Terry-Toons)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Amusing cartoon of prison. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SPEED LIMIT (Sportlight Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Speed in many sports. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

STARS OF YESTERDAY—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. A glimpse in an old motion picture star album. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

STOLEN JOOLS—*Paramount*, 2 reels. A benefit film with many, many stars. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS No. 7—*Universal*, 1 reel. A German sailor goes on a canoe voyage; an artist with no hands; a stamp collector papers his house; youngest orchestra in the world. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SWIM OR SINK (Sportlight Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Weismuller shows his pupils how to swim and dive. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

TENNIS TOPNOTCHERS — *RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. The technique of tennis brought out through slow motion. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THOM THE UNKNOWN (Vagabond Adventures Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. A visit to Cambodia. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

TRAFFIC TROUBLE (Mickey Mouse Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Mickey Mouse as a taxi driver in one of the best of these cartoons. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

A TRIP TO TIBET—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. The world's most inaccessible country. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE TUNE DETECTIVE—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Sigmund Spachth at the piano. *Family audience.*

UNDER PAR (Golf Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Johnny Farrell demonstrates how "under par" can be done. *Family audience.*

UPS 'N DOWNS (Looney Tunes)—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Amusing cartoon of horse racing. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

WINNING PUTTS (Golf Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Johnny Farrell shows the need for keeping calm when putting. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

YODELING YOKELS (Looney Tunes)—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Yodelers of Switzerland in a cartoon. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE



Vol. VI, No. 5

May, 1931

Some Gangster Films

A Noted Member of Our
Executive Committee

The Motion Picture
Records a Coronation



*Published monthly, except July and August, by the
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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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A Noted Member of Our Executive Committee

We have from time to time been presenting through these pages the members of our Executive Committee. This month we bring to you Dr. George W. Kirchwey, who despite his many activities still finds time for an interest in the work of the National Board. It is particularly fitting that the attention of our readers should be centered upon this member at this time when there is so much discussion of the crime picture, as no one is able to speak more authoritatively from experience on this subject than Dr. Kirchwey. — EDITOR'S NOTE.



Dr. George W. Kirchwey

GEORGE W. KIRCHWEY has given many years to the study and practice of law and particularly to criminal law. He was admitted to the bar in 1882 and practiced for ten years in Albany, N. Y. He later became Dean of the Albany Law School and, following this, Dean of the Law School of

Columbia University. He was Commissioner of Prison Reform, State of New York, from 1913 to 1914. From 1915 to 1916 he was warden of Sing Sing Prison. Since 1917 Dr. Kirchwey has been Director

of the Department of Criminology of the New York School of Social Work and is a member of the Committee on Criminal Courts of the Charity Organization Society of the City of New York. He is a vice-president of the Prison Association of New York.

Among the other offices Dr. Kirchwey has held are: counsel and director, Prison Inquiry Commission of New Jersey; federal director, U. S. Employment Service; general director, Pennsylvania Commission

on Penal Affairs; chairman, Department of Jurisprudence, International Congress of Arts and Sciences, St. Louis, 1904; president, American Peace Society; director, American Society International Law;

president, American Institute Criminal Law and Criminology; president, Welfare League Association, New York; director, National Society of Penal Information; member, American Bar Association. He was at one time Editor of Historical Manuscripts of the State of New York and is the author of many books on law and on crime and criminology.

Dr. Kirchwey's attitude toward the motion picture is one of understanding and sympathy and he believes naturally in a free screen unhampered by censorship. The National Board in carrying out its policy of "selection—not censorship—the solution" expends its energy more actively on the former, that is, organized interest in and support of the better films rather than an aggressive opposition to censorship. However, this sometimes becomes necessary and when upon one occasion we sought an opinion from Dr. Kirchwey regarding a pending federal censorship bill this is what he had to say — "As a device for stunting and crippling what is at one and the same time a great industry and a new and brilliant form of dramatic art, nothing better could be conceived than this censorship bill. Its censorship feature raises the reactionary and un-American practice of standardizing literature and art from a local to a national insult to the intelligence of the American people."

Upon the crime picture, or rather the influence of the crime picture, we have these timely words from Dr. Kirchwey. He said in speaking at one of our Annual Luncheons that he had become a "movie fan," so that he talks of the motion picture from the viewpoint both of being a student of influences and reactions through his years of research and contact and also as one who has seen and studied pictures. At this luncheon he reaffirmed the thought he had expressed at an earlier luncheon in the following words—"I have in my experience found not a single instance in which a criminal act or a criminal disposition could be traced to the influence of the movies. I

place the motion picture in the same category with the newspapers, the flood of modern literature, with art and with music and the drama, as being itself news and literature and art and music and drama all raised to a higher degree of expression and therefore to a higher degree of potency. It could not be denied that all of these forms of human expression, with their appeal to the imagination, to the emotions, have their dangers to the weak, the unstable, the perverted members of the community. The motion picture shares these dangers with the Kreutzer Sonata and Paul Whiteman's jazz, with Hamlet, with Porgy, with Helen of Troy, with the Bible. But what to do about it is the question. Shall we suppress everything that makes life colorful and interesting and hazardous?

"I still do not know a crook, among the many whom I do know, who attributes his downfall to the movies. However there is a positive as well as a negative side to the argument. All of these forms of emotional appeal, and particularly the motion picture, furnish a needed relief from the monotony of our work-a-day life. We must somehow or other devise proper outlets for the restlessness, the insatiable passion for experience, the craving for adventure, which are the characteristic traits of our young people. It is a trait of human nature that this baffled craving for experience may find something in the nature of a substitute, an imaginative satisfaction, and therefore a genuine outlet in the vivid presentation of the dramatic experience of others, brought to its height in the motion picture.

"The motion picture should as far as possible seek to create the illusion of a finer and braver and more beautiful life. People, especially young people, are infinitely suggestible. It is by suggestion not by didactic instruction that we form our attitude toward life and our mode of living. Morals cannot be taught. In the home, in the school or anywhere they can be learned, but we learn from the suggestion furnished by

(Continued on page 6)

The Motion Picture Records a Coronation

By MRS. H. MURRAY JACOBY

The Review Committee of the National Board has on its membership people doing many things of wide interest. It is always a pleasure to have brought to us accounts of these various activities. One very unique experience was recounted by our member, Mrs. H. Murray Jacoby and hearing her tell of it we asked for the story for our readers.—EDITOR'S NOTE.*

ON the second of November last, an event occurred which brought to the attention of the world a country which has been pursuing a fascinating civilization of its own for several thousand years, uninfluenced by and cut off from the outside world. I refer to that colorful land of Abyssinia, or Ethiopia as it is called officially, and to the coronation of its Emperor, Hailé Selassie I, to which I had the privilege of accompanying my husband, H. Murray Jacoby, the American Special Ambassador to the ceremony.

The traveler to Abyssinia must debark at Djibouti in French Somaliland and take the Franco-Ethiopian Railroad to Addis-Abéba. This five hundred mile railroad is the only one so far constructed in the country, but a more extensive transportation system is now being worked out by the government. One can travel quite comfortably in the really luxurious little white coaches of the train de luxe, which has "cabines de wagon lits" and makes the trip in about thirty-six hours, or more simply on a cheaper train which makes the trip in three days with stop-overs at night.

Although Abyssinia's contact with the outside world has been small in history several episodes stand out. In the Valley of the Kings, in Egypt, stands the very beautiful Temple of Queen Hatshepsut and amongst the endless writings depicting the events of her reign, written on the walls in hieroglyphics and illustrated by pictures, is an account

of the expedition of an Egyptian ambassador to the court of an Abyssinian king. The next incident bringing Abyssinia before the eyes of the world was the visit of the Portuguese under the leadership of Christoforo da Gama, brother of Vasco da Gama, in the sixteenth century. They found a highly civilized people, according to the standards of that day, an imperial court and a well established Christian church. The last episode which stands out in my mind is the defeat of the Italians in 1896. Italy had attempted to establish a protectorate over Abyssinia and the whole country rose up in arms, under the leadership of the Emperor Menelik II and routing the Italians, established in the face of the world their love of liberty and their ability to maintain their independence.

Nearly everyone is familiar with the famous story of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon and according to Abyssinian history the ruling house of Ethiopia has descended in unbroken line from the Queen of Sheba to the present ruler.

Since 1917 the country has been ruled jointly by the Empress Zauditu and the Regent, Ras Tafari who was also heir to the throne. The Empress died last May and November the second, 1930, was set as the date for Tafari to be crowned Emperor with the title of Hailé Selassie I. The literal translation of the Emperor's name is "Power of the Trinity" and was assumed by the Emperor in fulfillment of a vow made by his father, Ras Makonnen, whose children had all died in infancy, that should God grant him another son he would devote him to the service of the Holy Trinity. Tafari is a progressive and enlightened man and comes to the throne with an earnest intention to put his country in step with the modern world. He plans an extensive educational program and as a start has engaged an American college professor as director

*A picture of Mrs. Jacoby appears in the group photograph on page 23.

of education and at the same time issued an edict that the parents and priests of every village where the children cannot read and write Amharic will suffer a fine. An American financial adviser has also been engaged as the Emperor is anxious to put his country on a gold basis.

Fourteen of the most important nations of the world sent representatives to the coronation. England sent one of her royal sons, the Duke of Gloucester; France, the Marshall Franchet-d'Esperey and Italy, the Prince of Udine and the United States sent H. Murray Jacoby to present the congratulations of President Hoover.

Words cannot describe the reception we received. At every station the tribal chiefs had assembled in all their glory of gold-embroidered velvets, lions' mane head-dresses and elaborate swords and shields. At the capitol we were welcomed by the Crown Prince, a dignified young man of fourteen. The Prince himself escorted us to the Hotel Imperial where we were to stay as guests of the Ethiopian government during our entire visit. Sentries marched up and down in front of our door and we drove around in cars belonging to the Emperor, escorted by a troop of cavalry.

The ceremonies and festivities lasted a full week and quite outdid Hollywood in lavishness of display. Surrounded by over two hundred thousand tribesmen who had come from the outermost parts of the empire to assist at the coronation of their sovereign, we were actually living in the midst of a stirring epic drama of great historical significance. It seemed a pity that so great a pageant should be wasted on the relatively few of us that were there, so we rejoiced in the fact that we had persuaded Mr. Burton Holmes to accompany us and make pictures of the entire event to be shown to a large audience all over the world. The remarkable place which the motion picture holds as a historical and educational factor was more than ever brought home to me when I realized that the whole world would now be enabled to see this wonderful event

whereas a few years ago the best that could have been known of it would have been hearsay. With the motion picture however everyone can see the strange ceremonies of the Coptic Church, the dancing priests and the horns which they blew, similar to those which Joshua and his priests used before the walls of Jericho, as well as the gorgeous costumes of the tribal chiefs and their followers and the magnificence of the court.

Although Abyssinia has figured as a star in the motion pictures, it has yet to take the part of audience. It is true that the Emperor has a motion picture machine at the palace where pictures are shown to a privileged few and there is a small native theatre where ancient French "flickies" are shown occasionally, but there is no real commercial motion picture there as yet. There is still a long way to go in improvement of living conditions and wages before the people will even be able to comprehend the sort of picture which we turn out. However, it is my belief that as they become more educated to modern comforts and luxuries they will arrive at an understanding where the motion picture will become a part of their daily life.

After having been entertained with lavish hospitality by the Emperor and the principal nobles, we returned home anxious to make known to America our courteous, kindly friends in Abyssinia and to help in a small way to foster friendly relations between the two countries.

(Continued from page 4)

good example, by decent ways of living, good art and good music, good theatres and good sports. For this reason the motion picture, which has become such a commanding factor in this process of unconscious education, is and will still more become a molding influence in the lives of the people. Its choice of subjects and of treatment may well be a decisive factor on the crime rate of the next and succeeding generations. May not the producers of our great motion pictures wisely bear this in mind?"

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Some Gangster Films

THE PUBLIC ENEMY—Written by Kubeck Glasmon and John Bright, directed by William A. Wellman, photographed by Dev Jennings, with a cast including James Cagney, Edward Woods, Donald Cook, Joan Blondell, Jean Harlow, Leslie Fenton, Beryl Mercer and Robert Emmett O'Connor. Produced and distributed by Warner Bros.

CITY STREETS—Written by Dashiell Hammett, directed by Rouben Mamoulian, photographed by Lee Garmes, with a cast including Gary Cooper, Sylvia Sydney, Paul Lukas, Guy Kibbee, William Boyd, Wynne Gibson and Stanley Fields. Produced and distributed by Paramount.

QUICK MILLIONS—Written by Courtney Terrett and Rowland Brown, directed by Rowland Brown, photographed by Joseph August, with a cast including Spencer Tracy, Sally Eilers, John Wray, Marguerite Churchill and Warner Richmond. Produced and distributed by Fox.

FOR years there has been a fairly constant trickle of the kind of films generally called "gangster" films, but in the last year the trickle has become a deluge, and the continuance of it is the cause of a good deal of sincere agitation in many quarters. Just what the effect of these pictures is, psychologically and sociologically, is something that personal opinion, and even group opinion, cannot determine: only a thorough scientific study of the question can come anywhere near a correct answer to it. This discussion of certain recent

films of the gangster ilk will therefore not view them with any special alarm, or try to measure the harm or good such films may do to the public. It must be admitted that the public, for its weal or woe, appears to be as interested in seeing crime on the screen as in reading about it in the daily news, and no man in his right mind will expect picture makers to shut their ears to such an obvious box office call. It is the function of this department to consider what they make merely as motion pictures.

One fact is notable—gangster pictures have more vitality in them than any other class of pictures that is being made.

BULLETIN

THIS MONTH
Exceptional
(None)

Honorable Mention
City Streets
The Public Enemy
Quick Millions
Skippy

PREVIOUS MONTHS
1931

Exceptional
Cimarron
City Lights
Comrades of 1918

Rango
Sous les Toits de Paris
Tabu
Trader Horn

Honorable Mention
The Blue Angel
A Connecticut Yankee
Dishonored
East Lynne
Father's Son
The Front Page
Ten Cents a Dance



In "The Public Enemy" the two boys get their thrills by frequenting the hang-outs of shady people. James Cagney and Edward Woods observing life over a saloon door.

Even the poorest or most repellant of them are not likely to be dull—sordid, shocking, repetitious though they may be. They are crammed with action, which is the breath of life to a motion picture, and it is action on which life and death hang desperately—we know how desperately from what the newspapers report every day, and so we know how close to events among which we live these pictures sometimes get. The Wild West and the war, two other fields where active adventure and physical clash predominate, have become something like story-book lands, and the things that happen in them, no matter how interesting or exciting, touch us no more nearly than any other vivid fiction; but the gang wars belong to here and now, with the vital reality of something that might be happening at the present moment in the next street. No wonder the pictures about them fascinate us, sometimes to the verge of terror and anger.

The competition among producers of

gang pictures has brought about an exceptional competence in the making of them, for each new one must be more effective than the last to keep up the box-office lure. During the last month there have been at least three that stand out, for one reason or another, as good jobs of picture making.

The Public Enemy tries to give the impression of being something of a sociological document, presenting — editorially — its story and characters as a problem which the country must, *must*, **MUST** solve. This emphasis, contained in a foreword and an afterword, is all very well, but the picture does very little to solve it. It differs from most of the other pictures in showing its gangsters from boyhood, when the first seeds of evil were planted, and how associations and opportunity nourished those seeds into first-class specimens of modern crime. This attempt to uncover first causes is pretty superficial and unconvincing: Tom Powers seems to have been a bad lot from the beginning, cruel and a bully, with a

In "Quick Millions" Spencer Tracy starts as a truck driver. From that lowly position he watches how men get power, and coolly and capably sets out to become a rich racketeer.



natural instinct for taking what he wanted without any qualms about how he did it, or about other people's rights. His home life was certainly not a nursery of crime, for his brother, with no other advantages but what his own special interests and ambitions created for himself, turned out to be as upright a young man as ever graced the screen. The moral may be that boys should not be allowed on the streets—in this case it is not a moral with a very sharp point, for no active boy could be blamed for staying away as much as possible from a home so saturated with the kind of monotonous cloying sweetness that Beryl Mercer always exudes when she is given a mother part to play. The truly logical inference from the picture is that criminals are born, not made, which is no striking help toward the solution of the gangster problem.

The real power of *The Public Enemy*—and it has a certain power, of the hit-you-between-the-eyes kind—lies in its vigorous

and brutal assault upon the nerves, and in the stunning—stunning in its literal sense—acting of James Cagney. Incidents culled from the actual records of gangsterdom, which no writer would hope to make credible if he merely imagined them, are put on the screen with astonishing effect, and the position of women in the gangster's life is exhibited from an angle that the motion picture has hardly ventured to approach before. No girl, no matter how waywardly romantic, is likely to get any illusions about the thrill of being a gangster's moll from seeing how the ladies fare in this film. Women, on the whole, will probably find the picture an exceedingly unpleasant thing to look at.

The central figure is acted by James Cagney, who did more than anyone else to make *The Doorway to Hell* an interesting picture. Here he is a fairly thorough little rat, hard-boiled, vicious, cruel. As a piece of acting it is remarkable in its vividness and consistency. As a character its



In "City Streets" Gary Cooper starts as a crack marksman in a shooting gallery. Guy Kibbee—a gangster—is amazed at his technique.

effect is rather mixed—somehow it manages to create a kind of sympathy, not through understanding of the circumstances that are implied to have created such a man but by the subtle appeal that loyalty to friends and to a code always makes. The strongest impression is not that a gangster inevitably gets bumped off, but that there was something likable and courageous about the little rat after all.

In direction the picture is competent but not remarkable. It permits some rather painful doings on the part of Beryl Mercer and Jean Harlow, but it handles the men very effectively. And it keeps pretty closely to motion picture technique, telling its story with the camera without leaning too much on stage devices of dialogue.

City Streets makes no pretenses of doing

anything but tell a story in motion picture terms, and in doing this so ably it incidentally puts across the sinister elements of gangdom as nakedly and unequivocally as it has ever been done. Though the hero, after being jockeyed into a gang, enjoys the thrill of some of his escapades, no one is likely to get the idea that such a career is any fun. The whole entourage of treacherous cut-throats is too credibly vivid to allow any such illusions. In fact the biggest weakness of the film from the point of view of popularity is that it is utterly unsentimental, and that not one of the characters in it really makes any of the conventional appeal to emotional sympathy. The picture picks up its people wherever and whatever they happen to be, with no explanation of how they came to be what

they are, and puts them through the brutal and brutalizing machinery of gangdom with no bid for pity and no explicit pointing of a moral. It even avoids the stock moral of the gangster films that the wages of ganging is death: the boy and the girl get away in the end, and without whitewashing.

The important interest of the picture is not in its material but in the way the material is handled. Rouben Mamoulian got some serious and admiring attention when he made *Applause*, and this second piece of directing of his makes him strikingly watchable among Hollywood movie-makers. His style will have no tremendous novelty to people who are well acquainted with the Russians—some of his most outstanding devices, like the use of symbolism, were in full flower years ago in Eisenstein's *Ten Days that Shook the World* and Pudovkin's *End of St. Petersburg*. Mamoulian's employment of inanimate objects to suggest or reinforce human characteristics, and such bits of decorative sentiment as showing flying birds through prison windows to indicate that stone walls do a prison make, are obviously imitative, and he stresses them so hard that they not only seem self-conscious and arty—they also clog the movement of the story. All this, however, is natural and understandable in an imaginative director who is still in the stage of first experiments with the cinema—much more important is that he is imaginative, and is experimental, and that already he has unusual cinematic power of a kind all his own, which shows itself in a rare and individual ability to create moods upon the screen, with light and shadow and sound. He can build up a feeling of long, brooding suspense that grips you till you squirm. Most impressive of all, he can give love scenes a lyric lift and poetry that is as unusual as it is lovely. He did it in *Applause* by taking his young lovers up on a skyscraper and calling in the sky and the clouds and the wind to help him reveal the elemental forces that lie beneath the verbal banalities of love-making—in *City Streets*

he goes to the sea shore and puts his man and his maid in a setting that touches the conventional mating of two human atoms with something profound and universal.

Mr. Mamoulian, as a director, has a quality that is subtly but inescapably foreign—he shows familiar things as through a stranger's eyes. But he should add something important to the American screen, for he knows what the essence of the cinema is—as if to prove it he ends *City Streets* with one of the most thrilling chases that the camera has ever caught.

Quick Millions is also the work of a newcomer, as promising a talent as has appeared in many a day. His name is Rowland Brown, and this is his first picture. It would be a good picture made by anybody—it is exceptionally remarkable made by a young man before unheard of. It will probably not be a great box-office success: it is maybe too aloof and ironic and intellectual, without any of the quality known as "punch" to command mob attention. It demands an alert intelligence to follow its rapid movement and its unstressed implications, and a quick kind of sensitiveness that can respond more to deft and subtle suggestion than to emotional appeal. As a gangster picture it gets away from the liquor and gun-fighting that characterize most of such films, into the realm of racketeering that is deliberately big business, competing with legalized big business. The hero of it sets out quite definitely to be a big money power, not, as in *Little Caesar*, to gratify his ego by being king of the underworld, but through a purely intellectual concept of what power is, in modern society, and of how to obtain it. As he himself says, he is too nervous to steal and too lazy to work, but he has brains to think and plan with—so he builds up an organization that makes other people do the working and stealing that he can plan so capably, just as any money king builds up an organization.

Quick Millions also touches, as most gangster films make no pretense of doing,

on what society might or ought to do about racketeering. *The Secret Six*, by its very title, pretended to discover a way of fighting gansterdom, but it did it insincerely and wholly in the style of the old movie serials by using a version of the Hidden Hand as a *deus ex machina*, to step in and clean up the mess when the melodrama had run its allotted footage. *Quick Millions* at least suggests that business men and public opinion and district attorneys and judges have some responsibility in the matter, which is an extraordinarily adult thing for a movie to do these days.

But this film, aside from being the most intelligent of the gangster films, is probably most important for being the debut of a director who has a fresh and individual cinematic talent which will be exciting to watch. The technical success of both *City Streets* and *Quick Millions* is a startling indication that the value of experience in movie making is perhaps over-rated. Both Mr. Mamoulian and Mr. Brown are new, and Mr. Brown, the newer of them, probably has the advantage, because he has no practices of stage direction to unlearn. Both of them ought to be persuasive arguments for producers to take more chances with men who haven't been made dull and tired by the grind of long studio work.

One final word on gangster pictures: none of them solves any problems. They are merely entertainment, of a particularly up-to-the minute and exciting kind. They provide nothing but thrills and horrors, and some amusement, beyond what other movies provide. Until they admit, for instance, that some of our largest and most respectable fortunes are founded on racketeering as essentially anti-social and iniquitous as Al Capone's, they will get nowhere near a diagnosis of what this hugely head-lined evil really is. And until they understand the evil they cannot find a cure for it—they will be merely what they now are, a sensational pastime.

J. S. H.

Skippy

From the story by Percy Crosby. Directed by Norman Taurog. With a cast including, Jackie Cooper, Robert Coogan, Mitzi Green, Jackie Searle, Willard Robertson and Enid Bennett. Produced and distributed by Paramount.

IN the midst of the continuous gun toting and kaleidoscopic racketeering that have become synonymous with the term "talkie" of late, the film *Skippy* has an alert and spontaneous temper that only its predecessor *Tom Sawyer* has approached. Although it lacks the suavity of style, the measured pace, the imaginative handling that distinguished John Cromwell's film of *Tom Sawyer*, it has the same gently sentimental realism, the quick aliveness that are so rare in films of children.

Skippy is a simple, straightforward adventure in film making, intelligently adapted from the saga of Percy Crosby, and directed in the same style. Its peculiar flavor is this directness, this utter lack of pose and conceit, this naturalism. And this is chiefly attributable to the warm and vigorous performances of the children involved, to the square and robust intensity of the amazing Jackie Cooper of the "Our Gang" comedies, as its *Skippy*, to the eloquence of the younger Coogan as its Sooky, and to the amused and berating nonchalance of Jackie Searle, whose skill in playing the annoying child is making the genre peculiarly his own. Mitzi Green is the only one who seems miscast, a belated sophisticate among naturals.

The direction of *Skippy* is not particularly distinguished. Its style and attack are conventional, the photography is more or less routine, the use of sound and dialogue and cameras unimaginative. The film, as such, boasts no technical subtleties or original flair, yet it has such a disarming air of naturalness about it, such a scrupulous avoidance of overacting, a certain warmth in the handling of the actors, that one is persuaded in spite of one's self. There is

a freshness of text and texture about the film that is quite irresistible.

Perhaps it is recounted more from the adult point of view than the child's, but at that, its appeal is all inclusive, and at a time when no films are being made for the less than adult, *Skippy* is an oasis. There is no child performance with the exception of Jackie Coogan's in *The Kid* that compares with that of the older Jackie Cooper, whose playing of Skippy is one of the finest things the talkies have given us. I do not think that young Bobby Coogan is shown to the best advantage here as Sooky; he is a little too young, perhaps, and not always subtly directed. In his tragic moments, he is superb, but there were times when one felt the need of a Chaplin to handle his other scenes.

But, considered as a whole, *Skippy* is one of the most buoyant things the talkies have done, to date.

E. G.

THE American Library Association has endorsed the recent pictures *Cimarron*, *A Connecticut Yankee*, *The Great Meadow*, *Lightnin'*, *Tabu*, *Rango*, and *Skippy*. This brings to mind the thought of year-around library-theatre co-operation for Better Films Committees. Library shelves undoubtedly hold many books for suggested reading lists in connection with these pictures. Let the theatre advertise the library and the library advertise the theatre, two important community interests.

Jackie Cooper and Robert Coogan—Skippy and Sooky—trying to arrange for the paying of a dog license.



Third Annual Bridge Great Success

OVER one thousand people attended the third annual bridge party of the National Board of Review, which took place on May 2nd, on the roof of the Hotel Pennsylvania, New York City, under the auspices of the Membership Committee of the Board. Mr. Sidney S. Lenz and Mr. Wilbur C. Whitehead, well known and accepted authorities of the bridge world, were in charge of the playing.

Mrs. Oliver Harriman was chairman of the day and had serving with her on the patroness committee—Mrs. Donn Barber, Mrs. Howard Chandler Christy, Mrs. William Randolph Hearst, Mrs. Leonard L. Hill, Mrs. Adrian Iselin II, Mrs. H. Murray Jacoby, Mrs. Arthur Kelly, Miss Elizabeth Marbury, Miss Elizabeth Perkins, Miss Mary Pickford and Mrs. Myron T. Scudder. Able assistance was also given by the following members of the hostess committee: Mrs. William Beam, Mrs. Lewis S. Booth, Mrs. Howard Calendar, Miss Edith Ford, Mrs. H. G. Grover, Mrs. Everett B.

Heymann, Mrs. James F. Looram, Mrs. Leon A. McIntire, Mrs. A. C. Olson, Mrs. Henry Cole Quimby, Mrs. Frances Taylor Patterson, Mrs. Miriam Sutro Price, Mrs. Charles A. Stokes, Mrs. Lionel Sutro, Mrs. Carl A. Weil, Mrs. Davenport West, Mrs. J. S. Wrigley and Mrs. E. C. Yeandle.

One of the most interesting features of the Board's bridge is that the prizes are given by motion picture stars and companies. Motion picture celebrities were present. The prizes and their donors were: Janet Gaynor, silver fox scarf; Constance Bennett, sterling silver demi-tasse set; Mary Pickford, a Chinese carved amethyst crystal scent bottle; Maurice Chevalier, an eight piece pewter beverage set; Columbia Pictures "Dirigible" prize in honor of their new picture, Manning Bowman electric clock; Bebe Daniels, an order on Milgrim, New York City, for a spring hat, created by Sally Milgrim; Earle W. Hammons, president, Educational Pictures, a maple butterfly table; Leo Carrillo, Tiffany star, Brazilian onyx desk set; Ufa Films, Inc., a card table and chairs; Dorothy Mackaill, Innovation fitted over-night bag; Charles Farrell, Corona portable typewriter.

(Continued on page 23)



Celebrities at the third annual bridge and a few of the many prizes. From left to right (seated) Mr. Sidney S. Lenz, bridge authority; Mrs. Oliver Harriman, chairman of the day; (standing) Miss Anita Loos, author; Mr. Wilbur C. Whitehead, bridge authority; Miss Irene Delroy, motion picture star.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

THE Better Films Committee of Spartanburg (S. C.) is welcomed as the latest affiliated Committee of the National Board. This Committee has been effectively functioning for some time. In fact as far back as May, 1923, Spartanburg had the record of having run juvenile matinees for 17 months and having an attendance of 859 paid admissions at one performance out of a population of 22,000. The co-operation of the local newspapers has always been freely given to the Committee in carrying the reports of activity.

Mrs. N. Irving Hyatt, the Chairman of the Committee, has written to us that the group would like to undertake some study work at their monthly meetings. The outstanding children's work of this group is handled by Mrs. A. E. Woody, Matinee Director.

The purpose of the Committee so stated in the by-laws is "to encourage, foster and promote clean, wholesome and better films for the entire family circle." And its motto is that of the National Board, "Selection—Not Censorship—the Solution."

THE Community Motion Picture Council in Ridgefield Park, N. J., has been busy with many activities during the past season.

Shortly before the holidays a benefit for the unemployed of the community was sponsored at the local theatre. The film shown was *With Byrd at the South Pole* and by an arrangement with the theatre management a certain amount of the proceeds for the two day's showing went to a special unemployment fund. The Council members were active in supporting this and giving it wide publicity. Working with the Council was the Mayor's Committee, the Ministerial Association, the Women's Club, Music Week Committee, Parent-Teacher

groups, Kiwanis Clubs and other organizations. Bernt Balchen of the Byrd expedition and a resident of New Jersey was secured by the National Board as a speaker for the opening evening. Other special features were many local talent attractions including a violinist, pianist, a Highland piper, a little dancer, a radio entertainer and the High School band.

Another activity which has had the interest of the Club was a local picture entitled *A Romance in Ridgefield Park*. This picture was produced by the Ridgefield Park Elks and a committee of business men but was given support by the Council. Featured in the cast was the daughter of the President of the Council, Mrs. A. C. Olson. In various scenes of the picture, woven into the romance, are historical spots of the town, the interiors of homes, fire drills at schools, congregations leaving the churches, the board of commissioners, fire and police departments, and civic and fraternal organizations.

The diversity of Council interests has been wide, covering the fields of entertainment, social and educational activity. In the latter field was a special presentation in the local High School of the film *Mechanics of the Brain** secured from the National Board for showing to an invited audience of those particularly interested.

The Council in presenting this picture said, "We are following our customary policy of bringing to an audience interested only in the finer and unusual photoplay, those pictures eminently worthwhile, and likely not to be seen at any other time or place."

There was a fine representation of members of this Council at the Annual Conference of the Board this year.

*Reviewed in National Board of Review Magazine, April, 1928.

THE Rochester (N. Y.) Better Films Council has given its attention to many motion picture interests of the city and in return it is receiving much attention from the press, the University, the schools and other groups.

The dramatic critic of the Rochester Times-Union had in her column recently a statement about the Council, noting its first anniversary. Part of what she said is as follows: "The Rochester Better Films Council has recently passed its first birthday. It is allied with the National Board of Review and now has a membership of 25 persons interested in maintaining a high standard for films shown in Rochester. It uses the lists submitted by the National Board of Review. By arrangement with the Rochester press these lists are published each week before the opening of the films in the various theatres so that patrons may have some guide as to the type of entertainment offered. Many persons have declared the lists to be helpful. The members of the Council have also given their support to the showing of films of the better type by instituting a sort of 'grapevine' promotion system, each member telephoning to her friends her recommendation of a film found to be worthy of support and securing their co-operation in spreading the good tidings."

The March meeting of the Council was one to stimulate the interest of the members in the visual instruction work of the city schools. The speaker was Mr. Paul Reed of the Board of Education who spoke upon "Visual Education." He said, "Fifty of the public schools in Rochester are equipped with moving picture projection apparatus, and only six are unprepared to use teaching films. There is now a central library of these films that dispatches them to the various teachers upon request. The library has 70 now for circulation, and this number will undoubtedly be increased as money to buy more films becomes available. All these teaching films, which treat mainly of geographical and general scientific subjects, are made by the Eastman Teaching

Films Company, Inc., a subsidiary of the Eastman Kodak Company. Unlike the first educational films, they are made from the teacher's viewpoint and therefore are correlated with the other means of class room instruction. In fact, they are designed by committees of teachers of various subjects, at the invitation of the company. A little more than a year ago teaching films were first introduced into Rochester's public schools as part of the regular instruction scheme, and within the last six months they have increased in number and use rapidly. A careful check on their use and their value is being kept."

In connection with the visual education subject a number of the Ufa Educational films were presented. Mr. George David of the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, a member of the Council, reporting on these films wrote, "Four admirable educational films prepared by Ufa Films, Inc., were shown. They include *The Stork*, *The Mystery of an Egg*, *Capillary Action*, and *Castles of Paper*. The last was, for instance, a vindication of the existence of hornets, which never attack unless menaced, and which help to rid crops of injurious insects. The manner in which they make paper from wood was interestingly depicted. Various phases of the capillary action of water were instructively illustrated, and the rather astonishing effects of sound vibrations were shown graphically. Different stages of small underwater life were presented on the screen in an impressive manner."

At this meeting were present representatives from the City Normal School, Elmira College Club, New York State Music Federation, Chamber of Commerce, Y.M.C.A., Parent-Teacher Association, Smith College Club, Municipal Museum, Continuation School, Business and Professional Women's Club, and churches and schools of the city.

A project which has secured the interest of the Rochester Council as it has that of other groups in larger cities is the

support of a Little Photoplay Theatre, one showing to a specialized audience the unusual films or the entertainment films not having enough popular appeal for the larger theatres. The Council members have no active part in the Rochester Little Theatre management but they were interested in having the new manager, Mrs. Florence F. Belinson, present her plans for the programs at a Council meeting and they intend to support the Theatre by attendance and through their channels of publicity. Mrs. Belinson who did some interesting social work with pictures for children at the Strand Theatre there in war-time, explained the project of re-opening the Little Theater under the auspices of an organization now in the process of formation. She purposes to have the theatre conducted on a non-commercial basis, and to have its management shared in by many of the city's societies of cultured people who desire the best in moving pictures. She gave the assurance that there were not only many big feature pictures of artistic merit that the Little Theatre could have for first runs, because the commercial theatres do no regard them as good box-office "draws," but also a higher grade of short films than is usually seen. The theatre has opened very successfully with the exceptional picture *Outward Bound*. The Council has also been asked to lend its support to a Children's Drama League in the city.

Mrs. Hugh A. Smith, president of the Council, addressed a group of people interested in the formation of a Better Films Committee in Perry, N. Y., on April 24th. The Superintendent of the Perry Schools is interested and there is an indication that some active organization will follow from this initial presentation of a better films committee plan.

The trend of the times seems to be calling for junior groups in all Better Films Committees and Rochester is doing its part in this. One of the unique stories

of this interest is that of a young high school girl of Rochester, who listened to the radio broadcast of the National Board Annual Luncheon from New York City and hearing of the Junior Review work got in touch with the local Council and is now an interested representative from the John Randall High School on the new Junior Committee of twelve members.

The president writes us of many more plans to be carried out before the season is ended, among them a benefit showing for the Council and the Annual Dinner meeting, so that this Committee though a recent one is a busy one.

THE Charlotte (N. C.) Better Films Committee was represented by its president, Mrs. Thomas S. Franklin at the National Board's Annual Conference and thus had brought back to it a complete and comprehensive report of the Conference. As in other cities there was especial interest in the Visual Education session and Mrs. Franklin reported on this to a meeting of four hundred school principals and teachers upon her return to Charlotte. Dr. E. H. Garinger, principal of the Central High School and a member of the Better Films Committee, has written to us of the interest in this talk. He says, "I was so much impressed with the educational import of the talks which our president of the Better Films Committee heard when attending the National Conference, that I requested her to give a report to the teachers and principals at our April meeting. The four hundred educators were keenly interested in the facts and principles concerning visual education which the speaker heard discussed in New York. Mrs. Franklin has a delightful way of addressing herself in a most informal manner to a group and makes an emotional contact which is very valuable for the message that she brings . . . We all felt as if we had al-

most been present at the conference itself . . . The facts and ideas were so well presented that they will not be forgotten soon. The report by Mrs. Franklin emphasized the educational value of visual education and pointed out that the film was only one of the means in the visual education program. Other materials for such a program, we were told by the speaker, were models and living specimens observed during excursions. She used as an illustration of visual education the American Museum of Natural History, and stimulated in all of us a desire to promote school and municipal museums, film and slide libraries. Information that lists of educational films were being compiled by a committee from the Better Films National Council was helpful information given us by the speaker. I believe that this excellent report to the teachers and the principals of our city will stimulate a greater interest and a wider use of the visual education equipment that we have, and will promote a more thoughtful attitude toward the use of such equipment for educational ends."

We felt a sympathy for Mrs. Franklin when she told us she was "scared to death" to stand up before so many school teachers, and who would not be for are they not the "severest critics" after all! But evidently her fears were quite groundless and she came off with an A+.

COLUMBUS, GA., has a group of people interested in bringing the best to their city and in supporting that best, in its Three Arts League. The motion picture department of the League which has been concerning itself in different ways in the publicizing of good films has within the past few months secured the consent of the local newspapers to print a Weekly Guide Column of Selected Motion Pictures and this guide has been appearing regularly.

AMONG the friends from whom it has been our privilege to have visits within the last few weeks was Mrs. Mina Church Brann of Cabin John, Md., a suburb of Washington, D. C. Mrs. Brann has done much valuable motion picture work in the Bethesda (Md.) Women's Club and in the Montgomery County (Md.) Federation of Women's Clubs, of which she has been motion picture chairman, but now her activity has spread to a larger field and she is Motion Picture Reference File Librarian of the Maryland State Federation. This office she most capably fills due to her enthusiasm and to the amount of helpful information regarding motion pictures and better films which she has assembled in order to be able to answer all sorts of queries which come to her.

Particularly is she interested in the motion picture in the rural community and her reference book on this subject has been requested for exhibition at fairs, meetings and so forth. It has journeyed as far west as Denver, Colo.

Another pet project over which Mrs. Brann is very enthusiastic, described in a former issue of the Magazine,* is music in the theatres. One of the recent results of this interest is a suggestion for junior matinee programs of a little song for the children to learn and sing. It is a traffic song called "Wait for the Green Light" and the joy of singing it must teach the children unconsciously to be careful in crossing the street. The words and music are by the Rev. James H. Taylor, D.D., of Washington, D. C.

Thinking of Mrs. Brann's practical use of her interest in the motion picture causes the thought to come to mind that all Better Films Committees would do well to have a librarian among their officers to secure and make available helpful material for study and reference.

*April, 1930.

JUNIOR Matinee Chairmen wishing to give the young people of their community a chance to actively participate in matinee activity may utilize for other special observances the Boys' Week plan as carried out by the Jersey Journal Junior Club in which the Club and the Fox State Theatre of Jersey City, N. J., worked together. The Journal Club is composed of two groups, junior and senior. No one over 16 belongs to the Junior Club, beyond this age they are members of the Senior Club so that all those taking part in the theatre celebration of Boys' Week were truly "boys."

Of major importance was the timely booking for the entire week at the State Theatre of the Paramount film feature *Skippy*. On Saturday, April 25th, to usher in the week, the theatre was entirely managed and directed by a group of boys selected from the Junior Club. The editor of the sport page of the Club Magazine, a weekly forum edited by and for the young people of the community as a part of the Jersey Journal, took the place of the managing director of the theatre. The manager of the Junior baseball team and reporter on the Club Magazine, acted as assistant manager. Another member of the Junior baseball team acted as house manager, and another as publicity director; a member of the Junior Council, a recent winner in the art exhibit held by the clubs, handled the projection and stage departments and another was in charge of the maintenance department.

These boys had active supervision all day Saturday of the theatre, solving the problems of the day as they came up. Two young girls, one of the Junior Council, the other a Junior member of the Glee Club, also acted in official capacities at the theatre. Upon conclusion of their day's work at the theatre, each of these boys and girls was asked to write their impressions of the experience. The Theatre will award a three-month courtesy card to the one who submits the best essay. The judges will be the director of The Jersey Journal Club

Magazine and the managing director of the Theatre.

An additional feature planned for the opening of Boys' Week was a parade of the Boy Scouts. Over 600 boys paraded to the Theatre where they were the guests of the management at the opening show. This show among the specially arranged features for the young people included numbers played by the Fox State Band. Additional plans for the celebration of Boys' Week with other organizations interested in child welfare were planned for the entire week.

Undoubtedly the experience recorded by the young participants will be very interesting, as yet they are not available but we have a promise from Miss Lillian Brown, the Director of the Club to send them to us so that we may pass them on through our Magazine to Junior Matinee and Junior Review Chairman.

IT was a pleasure to have as recent guests of the National Board, Mrs. E. H. Ashcraft, Texas State D. A. R. Better Films Chairman, and Mrs. Earl G. Wyatt, President, Texas State Association of University Women. These two had come East to attend the meeting of the American Association of University Women in Boston and the meeting of the National D. A. R. in Washington, D. C., and between these cities they made a stop in New York.

We were pleased to have the opportunity to tell them at first hand of the work of the Board and they expressed satisfaction in hearing about it. Mrs. Ashcraft as a State Better Films Chairman was interested also in hearing from two members of the Better Films National Council of the National Board of their work. They were Mrs. Leon A. McIntire, Eastern Division Chairman of the D. A. R., and Mrs. E. H. Cahill, Motion Picture Chairman of the National Federation of Music Clubs. Texas, we learn from Mrs. Cahill, is one of the states particularly active in all phases of music study and program outlines.

THE Cleveland (Ohio) Cinema Club had more representatives at the Annual Conference of the National Board than any other affiliated group from a distance, there were five present—the president, first vice-president, publicity chairman, review chairman and bulletin editor. It was a pleasure indeed to have so many members of the organization, handling the different important functions of activity, with us and to have this opportunity of learning at first hand of their work.

The Club continues to be active in many phases of motion picture interest. Some examples of the special events which have held the interest of the members during the past season are a luncheon meeting arranged for Dr. Walter W. Pettit, ex-chairman of the National Board of Review and Prof. Leroy Bowman of the Board's Executive Committee; a bridge party which was given as a benefit for the fund to carry forward the weekly motion picture programs at local penal institutions; a courtesy matinee showing for the children of various settlement houses.

The luncheon for the two representatives of the National Board was held at the Chamber of Commerce Building and more than two scores members of the Club were present on a five-hour notice. As Dr. Pettit and Prof. Bowman were attending a series of meetings in the city they were unable to arrange their schedules so that they could give the Club advance word of their available time and so on the short notice of five hours the plans were made and members invited. This is almost a time record it seems for putting on a successful luncheon.

The fine institutional work which this organization is doing has been described to us in a letter from Mrs. W. J. MacLachlan, the publicity chairman from which the following is quoted: "The film exchanges are supplying us with films free of charge for our work in the prison and workhouse under instructions from the Film Board of Trade. We are working under the banner of the Cleveland Board of Education which

holds classes at night in the prison. As one of the teachers is a licensed operator he can operate the school films for us and does so. Also the Operators Union has donated its services to us. At first we got the films and returned them but now the Board of Education does that. Everyone is helping in the most wonderful manner. We are having the newspaper men, the feature writers in order to interest them in publicity for the work.

"It is the most interesting thing you can imagine to see the men file in under guard, some of them pretty hard characters. Our crowds are growing larger as they are letting in some of the cell block prisoners. The last showing we had about 800 men. One of the prisoners was brought up to me and introduced and I was asked if I wanted him to play the piano. Of course I did and I found out that he is a radio singer and player in for a minor offense. He never took his hands off the keys for two and one half hours. At the present time we are handicapped by our poor machine, and as we have only one we must wait between reels, also at present we can use only silent films in the prison chapel but we hope some kind-hearted person will donate better equipment, that is why we are having so much publicity and not because we want to boost ourselves so much.

"We are having the different machine companies in town demonstrate their portable talkies to us. Recently we had a man at the tubercular sanatorium which is a part of the Warrensville group, give *Flight* to an audience of about 250 young patients. The man in charge of the group is the most wonderful man you can imagine for the place. His heart and soul are wrapped up in the welfare of these groups. He gave movies there himself for a long time but his duties are so heavy that he had to give it up. He welcomes us with open arms and does everything he can for the inmates of the different houses. He does not want the farm called 'prison,' insists that it is a 'Correction Farm.' If any members of

your organization come to Cleveland and can do so do try to visit with us on a Thursday as we have the shows every Thursday night at 6:15 o'clock."

Perhaps some of our members may be in that city and if so, will, we hope, take advantage of Mrs. MacLachlan's kind offer to see this fine social betterment activity of the Club which has been described by one of the Cleveland newspaper writers as "bringing sunshine to the dark places."

"The films are carefully selected, with underworld scenes, drinking and gambling excluded. Historic or educational pictures, clean comedies and sport pictures are among those invariably selected for this purpose."

The Cinema Club has fine co-operation from the Cleveland Library which is the pioneer library in motion picture film tie-ups, and from the local newspapers. Recent pictures on which the Library co-operated are *Abraham Lincoln*, *Cimarron* and *The Great Meadow*. The newspaper advertisement for the picture *Cimarron* carried a special recommendation for the picture by the president of the Club. One of the feature writers on motion pictures of the Cleveland Plain Dealer talked to the Club members at their March meeting. In her column recently, this writer said in regard to some of the motion pictures we now have—"The newspapers and the movies are only a mirror held up to reflect the activities of present day life. There did not used to be murders every day in the paper nor gangland pictures every night on the screen. Why do we have them now? Because they are happening in our American life today. All any entertainment can do is to depict life as it is, and when our laws are right and we live right, there will be no cause for complaint of the movies. The trouble with our present system is that we are living in one way but wanting our entertainment to show life another. That cannot happen. It would not ring true."

The Bulletin of the Club continues regularly to carry to members and to outsiders, for it is widely distributed and posted, in-

formation regarding recommended pictures and items of general interest.

A motion picture activity in Cleveland which has gained the interest of the Club is the visual education in the school. Following a reference to this at our Annual Conference by one of the Cleveland delegates we had several requests for more information and in consequence we learned from the Club that the Public Schools have a large film library in which more than 2000 films are circulated each month. So plentiful was the material sent that we will give you at some future date more word about The Educational Museum of the Cleveland Schools.

WITH the growing importance of the work of Better Films Committees as distinct organizations with a definite field of activity some groups have deemed it wise not to have their organization limited by the designation of Committee, which seemed to imply a sub-group, and have therefore changed the name to Better Films Council. Such has been the case with the Birmingham (Ala.) group. The change was discussed at the monthly meeting last November and favorably acted upon so that the present name is Birmingham Better Films Council.

This Council issues a monthly Bulletin bringing matters of interest to its members. The February Bulletin included a resume of the work of the Council for 1930, among the notable items were the following: the membership represents over 5,000 persons, 162 individual members, 68 federated clubs, and 32 Parent-Teacher Associations; number serving on the visiting committees for neighborhood theatres, 53; number of Junior Matinees, 57; number of Bulletins issued, 4,000; number of school bulletins issued, one by Dr. Green, Superintendent of the Schools, instructing principals of all schools to announce junior matinees and one by the chairman of visual education of the P.-T.-A.; twelve regular meetings were held with an average attendance of 68.

The Bulletin also notes that generous space was given to the work of the Council by the News, Post and Age-Herald, leading dailies of the city. The feature of the March meeting, we were pleased to note, was a resume of the February number of the National Board of Review Magazine.

Particularly fine work is being done in the neighborhood theatres of the city. The members of the Visiting Committee visit and report upon these theatres and here Junior Matinees are held so that the children do not have to leave the locality for their motion picture entertainment.

AN extensive study of the motion picture was arranged for the year by the Toledo (Ohio) Motion Picture Council with various aspects of the motion picture and its effects upon the family presented by speakers prominent in Toledo's cultural and civic life.

Dr. A. W. Trettien, professor of psychology at the University of Toledo was the speaker at the first meeting of the season in the Chamber of Commerce. His subject was "The Psychology of the Motion Picture."

"Motion Picture Advertising" was discussed by the Chairman of the Advertising Committee of the Council at the meeting on December 9th. Miss Katherine Johnson, of New York City, addressed the group on the subject "Why We Go to the Movies." Miss Johnson, a Toledo girl, is associated with Walter B. Pitkin, professor of journalism at Columbia University.

The Assistant Superintendent of the Toledo public schools, was the speaker on February 10th. His subject was "The Effect of the Motion Picture on the Juvenile and the Public School." The pastor of the First Westminster Presbyterian Church, was the speaker at the next meeting, discussing "The Motion Picture and Life." He expressed himself opposed to censorship of the movies since it gets into restrictions, both social and economic. It is the positive

rather than the negative which meets with success.

"What the Motion Picture Means to us" was discussed at the April meeting. "The Picture as the Highest Art," will be the topic for May. The closing meeting of the year's program will be in June, at which time the secretary of the Toledo Chamber of Commerce, will be the speaker, his subject being "The Motion Picture from the Business Viewpoint."

The Toledo Motion Picture Council is among the new organizations in that city. Organized during the last year it has sponsored monthly meetings attended by representatives of various women's organizations, civic clubs and motion picture exhibitors and has become a power in the civic life.

CHAIRMAN of the Motion Picture Committee of her club, Mrs. Henry P. Briggs has written to us as follows of the activity of the Committee in special shows for children: "The directors of the Wellesley Hills (Mass.) Woman's Club forming a nucleus for a committee of six interested women have co-operated with the very able and conscientious manager of our local Community Playhouse, in presenting five children's performances on the first Wednesday of each month beginning in December and ending in April. Five more or less feature pictures, Dicken's *Christmas Carol*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, *Peter Pan* and *Rango*, have been combined with newsreels, Aesop Fables and Silly Symphonies to make well balanced programs of educational value and good fun. It is our custom to have pictures, in which we are interested, run off for our inspection, before we decide to include them in our programs. Some mothers have been very enthusiastic about our project—others feel that it is just one more thing for the children to do. But in view of the fact that so many children are allowed to go to

(Continued on page 27)



A table of those taking part in the third annual bridge. From left to right Mrs. H. Murray Jacoby, patroness; Mr. Sidney S. Lenz, bridge authority; Mrs. Oliver Harriman, chairman of the day; Mr. Wilbur C. Whitehead, bridge authority.

(Continued from page 14)

The table prizes, appropriately for a "movie" party, were miniature "Mickey and Minnie Mouse" figures. In addition to the score prizes listed above many others were given as door prizes, such as three dozen pairs of Van Raalte silk hose, lounging pajamas, an Eastman Kodak and numerous tickets to stage and screen performances. These were also donated by screen stars. Lack of space prevents giving a complete list, however, in all there were fifty-two.

We feel sure that our many friends in the city and those from near-by affiliated groups who attended were not disappointed in our "party" and we hope that they will be with us with their friends next year.

SPEAKERS from the National Board have been in demand by many groups and organizations during the past months. Those of our members who have responded to these requests for speakers have been Dr. Walter W. Pettit, Dr. Louis I. Harris, Prof. Leroy E. Bowman and Mrs. Miriam Sutro Price of the Executive Committee, Mrs. Leon A. McIntire and Mrs. Harry G. Grover of the Better Films National Council, Miss Evelyn Gerstein, of the Excep-

tional Photoplays Committee, and Mr. Wilton A. Barrett and Mrs. Bettina Gunczy of the staff. Some of the distant cities visited have been Cleveland, O.; Rochester, N. Y.; Jacksonville, Fla.; Charlotte, N. C.; Atlanta, Ga.; Birmingham, Ala.; Macon, Ga.; Columbus, Ga.; Providence, R. I. and Boston, Mass. Among the nearby communities have been Newark, Jersey City, Rutherford, Bogota, Caldwell and Ridgefield Park, N. J., and East Rockaway, Long Beach, Beechhurst, Long Island, N. Y.

The various organizations before which speakers have appeared are Better Films Councils, Parent-Teacher Associations, the Ethical Culture Society, D. A. R. Chapters, press clubs, women's clubs, church groups, dramatic groups, etcetera. The varied activities of these groups indicate the wide divergence of interest in the motion picture.

The National Board has also acted as ambassador between groups desiring speakers on motion picture subjects and those outside its immediate organization qualified to interestingly present these subjects. It is our hope that in making program plans for next year, you will freely call upon us for assistance either as to speakers or films as we are most anxious to serve you in all ways that we can.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIED INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

BIG BUSINESS GIRL—Written by Patricia Reilly and W. Swanson, directed by William A. Seiter, with Loretta Young, Frank Albertson and Ricardo Cortez. First National, 7 reels. A mild but amusing comedy of the so-called sophisticated type, having to do with a girl who has to make good in a big way before the boy gets ambition enough to do likewise. It talks lightly and frankly about things a previous generation would never have mentioned. *Mature audience.*

BORN TO LOVE—Written by Ernest Pascal, directed by Paul L. Stein, with Constance Bennett and Joel McCrea. RKO-Pathé, 8 reels. A war drama in which the heroine does a great deal of suffering as an American nurse who sacrifices happiness for the sake of her baby. Especially appealing to women. *Mature audience.*

CRACKED NUTS—Written by Al Boasburg and Ralph Spence, directed by Edward Cline, starring Bert Wheeler, Robert Woolsey, Dorothy Lee and Edna May Oliver. RKO-Radio Pictures, 8 reels. The two comedians as rivals for the throne in a mythical European kingdom. A typical Wheeler-Woolsey farce, with good laughs for those who like the type. Edna May Oliver is funny in her own special way. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

DAYBREAK—From a novel by Arthur Schnitzler, directed by Jacques Feyder, starring Ramon Novarro, supported by Helen Chandler, Jean Hersholt, William Bakewell and C. Aubrey Smith. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. A colorful Viennese story of a debonair lieutenant and an ingenuous little music teacher—how they skated over very thin ice and escaped tragedy. It is both sophisticated and charming, with a

vivacious performance by the star and excellent acting by everybody. *Mature audience.*

***DIRIGIBLE**—Written by Lt.-Commander F. W. Wead, directed by Frank Capra, starring Jack Holt, Ralph Graves and Fay Wray. Columbia, 10 reels. A spectacular air picture with many thrills. An explorer attempts to reach the South Pole in a dirigible but fails. Later he goes by plane and after his plane has crashed his party is rescued by a Navy dirigible. Excellent photography. *Family audience.*

THE DUDE RANCH—Written by Milton Krime, directed by Frank Tuttle, starring Jack Oakie. Paramount, 7 reels. An amusing Western story. About to lose his guests, the owner of a dude ranch plans excitement to keep them from leaving, and this leads to many strange events, including the capture of some notorious crooks. *Family audience.*

GOD'S COUNTRY AND THE MAN—Written by J. P. McCarthy and Al Bridge, directed by J. P. McCarthy, starring Tom Tyler. Syndicate Pictures Corp., 6 reels. A ranger and a woman government agent working independently against gun-runners on the Mexican border and eventually joining forces. Some good acting and many excellent melodramatic effects. *Family audience.*

INDISCREET—Written by DeSylva, Brown and Henderson, directed by Leo McCarey, starring Gloria Swanson, supported by Ben Lyon, Barbara Kent and Monroe Owsley. United Artists, 8 reels. A mixture of light and serious, ranging from farce bordering on the slap-stick to tears and heavy melodrama. Unconvincing in its serious moods but amusing for those who like the star in her fluffier moments. *Mature audience.*

THE IRON MAN—From the novel by William R. Burnett, directed by Tod Browning, with a cast including Lewis Ayres, Robert Armstrong and Jean Harlow. Universal, 8 reels. A good story of the prize ring. "The Iron Kid" becomes champion and gets quite cocky. Only when his wife deserts him and he loses the championship does he return to his senses and his old friends. *Family audience.*

LADIES' MAN—From the novel by Rupert Hughes, directed by Lothar Mendes, with a

cast including William Powell, Kay Francis and Carole Lombard. Paramount, 8 reels. A sophisticated picture dealing with the difficulties a ladies' man has with all the women with whom he has gaily philandered when he finally falls really in love. A well directed production with finished acting and clever dialogue. *Mature audience.*

THE MILLIONAIRE—Written by Earl Derr Biggers and Booth Tarkington, directed by John G. Adolfi, starring George Arliss, supported by David Manners, Evelyn Knapp and Noah Beery. Warner Bros., 8 reels. Good entertainment of the wholesome kind. The story concerns an aging millionaire who is forced to retire from his business on account of his health, and how he was so unhappy he became a laboring man to keep from dying of boredom. Mr. Arliss gives one of his most lovable characterizations, though it will hardly be taken for an American. *Family audience.*

***MOTHER'S MILLIONS**—From a play by Howard McKent Barnes, directed by James Flood, with a cast including May Robson, James Hall and Lawrence Gray. Universal, 9 reels. A wealthy woman outwardly cold to her two children, crushes her enemies and comes through with the love of her family and the respect of world. May Robson gives a particularly good performance as the millionaire mother who is afraid her children will squander the fortune she has built up for them. *Family audience.*

NOTE: Title changed to *She-Wolf of Wall Street*.

NAPOLI CHE CANTA (Naples Singing)—Written by Mario Almirante, featuring Anna Mari. Savoy, 7 reels. This picture, *Naples Singing*, is an Italian production, with subtitles and a few talking and singing sequences in Italian. It is interesting for its genuine pictures of Naples and Capri. *Family audience.*

LA REGINA DI SPARTA (The Queen of Sparta)—Italfilm, 9 reels. One of the earliest historical spectacles made in Italy under the title of *The Fall of Troy*. It has been excellently fitted with sound and dialogue in Italian. In spite of its age and crudities it is a very interesting and effective filming of the Homeric story which students, particularly, should find valuable. *Mature audience.*

***THE SECRET SIX**—Written by Frances Marion, directed by George Hill, with a cast including Wallace Beery, Lewis Stone, Clarke Gable, John Mack Brown, Marjorie Rambeau and Jean Harlow. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. A committee of citizens wipes out gang rule in a big city. Vivid and exciting, and unusual among gangster films because law instead of personal vengeance defeats the criminal in the end. Well done in every respect. *Mature audience.*

SEED—From the novel by Charles G. Norris, directed by John M. Stahl, with a cast including John Boles, Lois Wilson and Genevieve Tobin. Universal, 11 reels. An interesting story of marriage. Hampered by his five children, an author leaves his wife and goes to another woman in order to be able to write.

Years later his children win him back. The acting of Lois Wilson as the mother, and that of the small children, is excellent. *Mature audience.*

SHIPMATES—From a story, "Maskee" by Ernest Paynter, directed by Harry Pollard, starring Robert Montgomery supported by Ernest Torrence, Cliff Edwards, Dorothy Jordan and Hobart Bosworth. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels. The rise of a sailor from an oiler to Annapolis. There is a slight Horatio Alger flavor to it, but it is entertaining and has some interesting U. S. fleet manoeuvres. It should make a good navy recruiting picture. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

STEPPING OUT—Written by Elmer Harris, directed by Charles F. Reisner, with a cast including Reginald Denny, Leila Hyams and Charlotte Greenwood. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels. Two wives, to teach their husbands a lesson, step out themselves. The humor is chiefly of the bedroom-farce order, Charlotte Greenwood supplying most of the laughs. *Mature audience.*

***SVENGALI**—From George DuMaurier's novel, "Trilby," directed by Archie Mayo, starring John Barrymore, supported by Marian Marsh, Donald Crisp, and Bramwell Fletcher. Warner Bros., 8 reels. The character of Svengali has been made the center of the story and built up into a more effective dramatic being. The story itself, while losing some of the charm of its original, makes a better motion picture because of the changes. A remarkable performance by John Barrymore. *Mature audience.*

***TARNISHED LADY**—Written by Donald Ogden Stewart, directed by George Cukor, with a cast including Tallulah Bankhead, Clive Brook, Phoebe Foster and Osgood Perkins. Paramount, 9 reels. The drama of a society girl, left penniless, who marries a wealthy man seeking happiness but finding only disillusionment. The acting of Miss Bankhead, in a cast composed mostly of stage actors, is excellent. *Mature audience.*

THE TEXAS RANGER—Written by Forrest Sheldon, directed by Ross Lederman, starring Buck Jones, supported by Carmelita Geraghty and Harry Woods. Columbia, 6 reels. A Texas ranger goes out to capture a woman outlaw and ends by proving her innocent of the crime attributed to her and cleaning out a gang of criminals. Good juvenile adventure. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

TROIKA—Written by M. Linsky and J. Salkind, directed by W. Strifovsky, featuring Hans Schlettow, Olga Tchekova, Helen Steele and M. Tchekov. Film Exchange, 11 reels. An over-long but powerful story of a Russian troika-driver and a temptation that upset his life. Made under German influence, it has much of the familiar Russian technique but none of the usual Russian propaganda. *Mature audience.*

THE VIRTUOUS HUSBAND—From the play, "Apron Strings," by Dorrance Davis, directed

by Vin Moore, with a cast including Betty Compson, Elliott Nugent and Jean Arthur. *Universal*, 8 reels. How a dead mother retained her influence over her son by leaving letters of advice to be given to him at certain times of his life. Only when the letters are destroyed and he has to decide things for himself does he find happiness. *Mature audience.*

THE YANKEE DON—Written by Madeline Allen, directed by Noel Mason, starring Richard Talmadge. *Worldart*, 7 reels. A picture of the eighteen-eighties, about a Bowery boy who goes West and helps a Mexican don save his property from outlaws. A rather juvenile film, with plenty of acrobatics and wild riding. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

City Streets

(See page 7)

Mature audience.

The Public Enemy

(See page 7)

Mature audience.

Quick Millions

(See page 7)

Mature audience.

Skippy

(See page 12)

Family audience. Junior matinee.

SHORT SUBJECTS

AFRICAN BOMA (Adventures in Africa Series, No. 2)—*Vitaphone*, 2 reels. Life in an African village or boma. *Family audience.*

A'HUNTING WE DID GO (Robert Bruce Scenic)—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Mr. Bruce says, "Why do people go to Africa to shoot wild animals when they can stay in America and shoot them with a camera?" Showing many wild animals making friends with the cameraman. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND (Cartoon)—*Paramount*, 1 reel. A comedy song number of the first jazz music. *Family audience. Junior Matinee.*

THE BACK PAGE—*Educational*, 2 reels. A goofy reporter captures a notorious criminal and thereby wins the daughter of his employer. *Family audience.*

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, No. 9—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Ripley cartoons strange facts. *Family audience.*

THE CASTAWAY (Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Mickey Mouse shipwrecked and cast upon a desert island where adventures await him. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

CINDERELLA BLUES (Aesop Fable)—*RKO-Pathe*, 1 reel. Modern version of the Cinderella tale. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

COWCATCHER'S DAUGHTER—*Educational*, 2 reels. Burlesque love story with some antics by a trained horse and much barnyard humor. *Family audience.*

CROSS ROADS—*Educational*, 1 reel. Lovely views of Hawaii in color. *Family audience.*

DIAMOND EXPERTS (Sportlight Series)—*RKO-Pathe*, 1 reel. Ty Cobb tells Grantland Rice how he made good in baseball. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

DON'T DIVORCE HIM—*Educational*, 2 reels. Clever comedy about a divorce lawyer's clerk who ruins the divorce business. *Family audience.*

THE FIREMAN (Cartoon)—*Universal*, 1 reel. Oswald, the Lucky Rabbit, goes to a firemen's picnic. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

FLY MY KITE—*Our Gang, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 reels. Amusing melodramatic plot, with an astonishing grandmother and some kid antics not to be held up as a model for small children. *Family audience.*

*FOOTBALL THRILLS—*Pathe*, 1 reel. A marvelous slow motion picture showing dramatic plays made on the gridiron in the last few years. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

GETTING ON THE GREEN (Golf Series No. 6)—*RKO-Pathe*, 1 reel. Johnny Farrell demonstrates the importance of the drive and the approach to the green. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

GHOST PARADE—*Educational*, 2 reels. A funny burlesque of a mystery drama. *Family audience.*

HELLO EVERYBODY—*British International*, 2 reels. English revue acts which include a charming song and dance act, and a burlesque of Fairbanks and Pickford in *The Taming of the Shrew*. *Family audience.*

HUNTING THRILLS (Sportlight Series)—*RKO-Pathe*, 1 reel. Catching alligators in the Everglades. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

INTO THE UNKNOWN (Adventures in Africa Series, No. 1)—*Vitaphone*, 2 reels. The arrival of Hubbard's expedition in Africa and the preparation for the trip into the interior. *Family audience.*

LAUGHING GRAVY—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 reels. Laurel and Hardy have a difficult time in keeping their dog in a hotel that does not allow dogs. Full of laughs. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

LET'S DO THINGS—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 3 reels. Funny comedy of two girls who work in a music store and their evening out with two unattractive men. *Family audience.*

THE LION HUNT (Adventures in Africa Series, No. 3)—*Vitaphone*, 2 reels. The explorers capture two lions. *Family audience.*

LOVE TALES OF MOROCCO—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 reels. One of the dog comedies in which members of the Foreign Legion tell of the disasters that made them enlist. Unusually good burlesque. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

*MAD MELODY (Aesop Fable)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Comedy musical cartoon with excellent synchronization. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MOTHER GOOSE MELODIES (Silly Symphony)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. All the Mother Goose favorites in cartoon antics. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MOVIE MEMORIES, No. 5—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Made with the co-operation of Liggett-Meyers. Baseball as played in 1905; Prince of Wales as a child; Mabel Normand, Mary Pickford and Mack Sennett; the Smart Set in 1904; and other interesting shots. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MUSICAL CAMEOS—*British International*, 2 reels. English musical revue, acts excellently photographed, good dancing. The humor is typically English. *Family audience.*

ON THE AIR—*British International*, 2 reels. Good entertainment for those who like English musical revues, presenting London favorites in typical acts. *Family audience.*

ONE OF THE SMITHS—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 3 reels. Charley Chase, traveling for a company that sells tubas and bass horns, runs into some novel and amusing adventures in the Ozark Mountains. *Family audience.*

OUTBOARD STUNTING (Sportlight Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Games and stunts done with outboard motor boats and sleds. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL, No. 9—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Lowell Thomas goes hunting in Abyssinia; harmonies on the harp with Virginia Morgan; James Kirkwood shows some clever golf strokes. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE REAL-ESTATERS—*Paramount*, 1 reel. A Jewish comedy act in which two men trying to sell unsalable lots are foiled by a woman. *Mature audience.*

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS, No. 8—*Universal*, 1 reel. Odd happenings including a woman who catches rattlesnakes for a living; a millionaire Indian who conforms to his old customs; a

man who eats razor blades and others. *Family audience.*

THE SULTAN'S CAT (Cartoon)—*Educational*, 1 reel. An amusing comedy. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SUNNY SOUTH (Cartoon)—*Universal*, 1 reel. Oswald the Lucky Rabbit travels South. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SWISS MOVEMENT (Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Krazy Kat finds trouble in a clock shop. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THREE WISE CLUCKS—*RKO-Pathé*, 2 reels. An amusing comedy of three men who frame their friend but find the tables turned. *Family audience.*

TWO A.M.—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Excellent nonsense with Tom Howard as a naive burglar. *Family audience.*

THE TWO BARKS BROTHERS—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 reels. Burlesque melodrama with dogs as characters, about one dog running for district attorney and his rival who turns out to be his long-lost brother. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

(Continued from page 22)

the movies indiscriminately, we feel that our time has not been spent in vain if we have given them at least five safe, suitable and entertaining programs." In her letter to us Mrs. Briggs says, "We have followed with great interest your National Board of Review suggestions in regard to the rating of pictures."

This Committee is fortunate in having such a co-operative theatre manager and the following excerpt from a letter from him indicates his interest, "So far we have had two special children's shows but both shows were distinct successes in every way. We are planning shows on Wednesdays as there is no school on Wednesday afternoons. If it seems possible to procure enough entertainment of the proper sort I believe it will be worth while running often. But I feel sure that much of the material you list and which seems to meet the standards of committees in other sections of the country will not do for Wellesley as we principally aim to entertain and instruct children between four and five years of age."

THE BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL

of the

National Board of Review of Motion Pictures

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Better Motion Picture Programs in Your Home Theatre

The Better Films Committee or Motion Picture Study Club plan has been found by many communities to be an adaptable and effective method of accomplishing telling organized local work for better pictures.

The purposes of the Better Films Committees affiliated with the Better Films National Council are:

To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

The Better Films National Council as an aid in carrying out these purposes furnishes an information service through its various publications.

Please use the coupon below and write for the publications you yourself would like or would like to have sent to interested friends.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE



Vol. VI, No. 6

June, 1931



Among the scenery at the opera in "Le Million" (see page 13)

*Published monthly, except July and August, by the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures*

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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JUN 23 1931

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Vol. VI, Number 6

June, 1931

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Looking Ahead

The National Board of Review Executive Committee members represent many different phases of public life. These members, in order to acquaint our readers with the personnel of the Board, have been presented from time to time through the pages of this Magazine. With this number we bring to you, Dr. Louis I. Harris, one of the Committee's most active and interested members.

Dr. Harris is a physician who has been in general practice for twenty-four years. In 1907 he entered the field of public health becoming, in 1915, Chief of Industrial Hygiene of the Department of Health of the City of New York. Through Civil Service promotion he was appointed Director of the Bureau of Preventable Diseases in 1917, in which year he also received the degree Doctor of Public Health from New York University. As one recommended by the New York Academy of Medicine, he was chosen to serve as Commissioner of Health of New

York City in 1926 and held that office for nearly three years. He is a member of the American Medical Association, the American Public Health Association, the Academy of Medicine of New York and many other scientific and social service organizations. His interest is not only in physical

health but in mental health—for he believes that they go hand in hand. He is greatly interested in all matters relating to the general subject of social welfare in which mental health and hygiene play a very distinct role. It is the thesis of Dr. Harris that good health is not merely the result of physical endowment and environment, but is dependent on various social and economic factors, so that he relates health to housing, good wages and many other conditions of living, among them proper recreation.



Dr. Louis I. Harris

This latter has been his angle of approach to the work of the National Board of Review, his strong feeling being that the motion picture as a recreational agency has an

important destiny to fulfill from the standpoint of mental health and of education as well. In our interview preparatory to bringing word to you from him, we felt that the Executive Committee possessed in him a member who, although he appreciated the Board's past was concerned chiefly with its future. For in the paragraphs below he recognizes that laurels won in the past have their place, but he looks to new accomplishments in answer to new needs.—THE EDITOR.

THE members of the Executive Committee of the National Board of Review, as pilots of the organization, have been busily engaged recently in making a study of what has been accomplished by the Board, examining to what degree it has been socially constructive and whether, like all things that aim to keep in step with progress, we need a re-orientation with regard to our objectives and the methods of reaching them. We know that it is easier to utter a slogan which describes an effort than to devote oneself with a singleness of purpose to the achievement of a definite aim. This may sound a bit platitudinous but it becomes clear perhaps if we state in concrete terms how this applies to present activities of the National Board. Our slogan is "Selection, Not Censorship." This slogan has a sound that is euphonious to the ear of a liberal; but in actual accomplishment the Executive Committee realizes how difficult it is to make this slogan practically effective.

We were called into being in the early days of the motion picture because of a public reaction to the extreme and primitive crudeness and banality that were then the prevailing mode. It seemed desirable to those who feared censorship to secure a competent and adequate expression of persons of experience and intelligence in the social and educational fields to express on behalf of the public a viewpoint and to formulate guiding principles that would promote the exhibition of taste, sanity and

intelligence in the production of films for the purpose of recreation and education.

To escape official censorship, which twenty years ago was as repugnant to intelligent and generous minded persons as it had been to the founders of our government, a group of citizens was organized to express a critical judgment—serving as a cross section of the intelligent citizenship of the community—with respect to the character of each film produced as a means of creating improved standards through constructive criticism and the creation of a sound and informed public opinion. In common with other members of the Executive Committee, and in harmony with the fundamental principles of the National Board, I believe that we should not only continue to oppose censorship but avoid being guilty of it ourselves whether by direction or indirection. We must ask ourselves, without regard to past achievements, whether we cannot work still more effectively and widely to prevent the strangling of this important medium of expression by censorship and to stimulate an intelligent and influential public opinion that will help realize to the full, the social usefulness of the film.

This does not afford the space that is necessary to give a chronicle of how this volunteer Board—The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures—has been functioning during the twenty-three years of its experience, nor is there opportunity to offer a critical self-examination of our deficiencies, of which we are all well aware. I should like to present a suggestion of what I see to be the most practical and useful extension of our methods for present and future needs. In some of the proposals which I venture to offer, I have reason to feel that the other members of the Executive Committee concur. In others, where there may be a justly divided opinion, let me assume sole responsibility.

It is my opinion we could serve the American community more effectively than we do, by a wider distribution of our ser-

vices in social and educational fields, if our financial resources permitted.

We could engage a "faculty" of several of those most skilled in the art of critical appraisal in the dramatic, educational and literary fields, persons who have an independent and liberal conception of the uses and technical qualities and limitations of the motion picture, and of its possibilities for the great average audience as well as audiences of a special character. Such a "faculty" would serve usefully if it were to devote all of its time to the selection of members of the Review Committee, to school them, as far as necessary, so that all pictures would be reviewed under its general guidance. Were we to obtain the proper social funding necessary for this purpose, we would be equipped to carry on an advance reviewing service of far greater scope than at present. Thus would be provided a more valuable source of information to parents and educators and to the public in general and a genuine stimulus to the exhibition of higher standards in production.

The critical appraisal of each picture seen in advance by the Review Committees of the National Board and appearing in the Weekly Guide to Selected Pictures would then be sent without charge to educators, libraries, child welfare groups, to the principal magazines and newspapers of the country and to many other agencies which have intimate contact in different ways with community groups.

The wider and freer distribution of such information in advance of the appearance of pictures than we are able at present to furnish should help to shape and inform public taste, which, in the final analysis, is the only force in a democratic country which would determine the quality and character of pictures. It is my thought that the National Board should not attempt to point out only what pictures have exceptional or above-the-average merit, from a social or educational viewpoint, but that its reviews should be ex-

plicit though brief, in respect to every picture seen by the Review Committees.

In addition to its publication services, in which the Board draws attention to those pictures which have especial merit, those that are appropriate for the family groups, and those that are especially adapted for the needs of children, it could go further and authorize producers to flash on the screen some special legend adopted by the Board to show with respect to such pictures the judgment of the Review Committee. For example, the following legends might be used: "Passed by the National Board of Review as a picture especially suitable for family audiences," "Passed by the National Board of Review as a picture especially suitable for child audiences." All other pictures should bear the legend, "Seen by the National Board of Review." Every change is accompanied by some inconvenience and expense, but I believe this could be made most helpful to the public and useful to the industry. Having sent information regarding these special recommendations broadcast through various releases of the Board, it would offer a way of apprising the public through newspapers and other channels of public communication, in advance of the facts that are necessary for the selection of family pictures, pictures for children and of the special films desired by discriminating patrons.

This, in sketchy form, which requires much amplification and explanation, would seem to me to be a necessary step in enlarging the field of the National Board of Review as a medium of social usefulness to the American community. To accomplish this we need support of a kind that is in sympathy with the broad social aims of the National Board of Review.



Films Bring the Far-Away

THAT the motion picture in the theatre is a valuable means of bringing to the spectator the peoples and customs of far countries is an established fact, such films as *Grass, Chang, Nanook of the North* and *Rango* proving it. But a higher recognition of the value of the motion picture as a means of describing, graphically and vividly, exploration and adventure in the distant places of the earth for the specialists is seen in the increased use of the motion picture in the program of lectures presented by the National Geographic Society to its members.

The 1930-31 program included sixteen lectures. The first lecture was given by Dr. Laurence M. Gould, second in command of the Byrd Antarctic Expedition. Dr. Gould is professor of geology at the University of Michigan and through his explorations has contributed notably to science. His address was illustrated by colored slides and interesting motion pictures.

The second lecture "The Depths of the Sea," was by Dr. Raymond L. Ditmars, curator of the Department of Mammals and Reptiles of the New York Zoological Park. The motion pictures presenting close-up illustrations of marine life, were prepared at the Biological Station at Naples, Italy. Many of the views were obtained through the courtesy of the late Prince of Monaco.

"My Quest of the Saiga Antelope and Long-haired Tiger" by William J. Morden told of the trip made by him and his associates in search of the saiga and Siberian tiger in Russian Middle Asia. The life of the people in this territory which is closed against ordinary travelers was interestingly shown in films and beautifully colored slides.

Unique motion pictures and colored slides also illustrated the lecture of Captain Albert W. Stevens, telling of the survey made by a National Geographic Society group

which flew from Washington to Buenos Aires in one of the world's largest flying boats to make a geographical and photographic study of the east coast aerial route between North and South America.

"Kashmir and the Taj Mahal" was the subject of a lecture by Captain John Noel. The romantic beauty of the country, the habits of its people and the story of the Mogul emperors were impressingly pictured on the screen.

Captain Robert A. Bartlett the beloved "Cap'n Bob" of the good ship "Morrissey" gave in his lecture on "The Land of the Lost Eskimos" an illustrated picture of the northeast coast of Greenland.

"Two Miles Down" by Dr. William Beebe told the story of Dr. Beebe's under-sea research work, the romantic account of man's first invasion of the 1,462 foot level beneath the surface of the waters of Bermuda. Sealed in a steel ball, six feet in diameter, Dr. Beebe last summer witnessed through portholes fitted with strong quartz glass the marvels of an alien, mysterious creation. The lecture was illustrated with remarkable motion pictures and colored slides.

"The New Turkey" was described through photographs and unusual motion pictures by Dr. Maynard Owen Williams, foreign staff representative of the National Geographic Society after a 2,500 mile trip through the country in an autobus studying the people and the country at first hand.

"Sea Hawks" presented by Captain C. W. R. Knight was a film story the scenario of which began twenty years ago in Scotland, where is shown the theft of the last nest of eggs of the osprey, resulting in the extermination of the species in Great Britain. The story then comes to New York and Gardiner's Island, the home of the largest remaining osprey colony and a paradise for Captain Knight and his camera.

The members were brought to their own country again in the lecture on "Canoeing the Snake and Columbia Rivers" which was also made vivid through original motion pictures.

"Rounding Cape Horn by Sail" was told in remarkable motion pictures of the voyage of the "Grace Harwar" from Walleroo, South Australia, to Cobb, Irish Free State, which are the results of the determination of two young Australian journalists to make a photographic record of a cruise in one of the old sailing ships before they had become utterly lost to the seas.

Motion pictures and colored slides of great interest illustrated the lecture by Dr. Robert F. Griggs "Five Thousand Miles for a Liverwort."

Arthur C. Pillsbury, who has contributed some fine motion pictures to the theatres in various Pathe series, lectured to the Society on "Undersea Life in the South Seas" with motion pictures, some of which were in color, of the submarine plant and animal life in the Fiji Islands and Samoa.

Motion pictures and colored lantern slides well illustrated the lecture by Dr. Roy Chapman Andrews on "The Prehistoric Life of Gobi," telling of the latest work of the Central Asiatic Expedition.

The final lecture of the season was given by one who is a member of the National Board's General Committee, Admiral Richard E. Byrd, who presented a motion picture record of his expedition of nearly two years in the Antarctic which covered much material not included in the Paramount version of the expedition.

Knowing that so much good motion picture material of this kind has been recorded it is regrettable that more is not shown in the theatre for, however much our dramatic plots appeal, films such as these would come as a pleasant relief and those interested in the support of the best films and the unusual films can by their patronage and interest indicate to theatre managers a desire for more "films of the far-away."

Two of these films, *Linking the Americas*

BALLADE OF THE MOVIES

When travelers ask me if I've seen
The wonderland of far Peru,

Or if on tropic waters green
The mermaids swam within my view,

Or if I've gazed on Timbuctoo,
Or gazed at Jungfrau's summer snow,

I answer "Yes," for it is true
I've seen them—at the Movie Show.

Of kings and all their wide demesne,
Of coronation's retinue,

Of ships of air and submarine,
Of war in all its horrid hue—

Of each and all I've made review,
And I can say, for well I know—

"Some sights, but they are nothing new,
I've seen them at the Movie Show."

When book-worms praise "The Faerie
Queene,"

Or thrill at deeds of "Roderick Dhue,"

Or tell "Quo vadis" vivid scene,
And rave how old Dumas would do

I say, "My nightly rendezvous
Is such that books I must forego,

And though I never read them through
I've seen them at the Movie Show."

by *Air* and *Five Thousand Miles for a Liverwort*, are owned by the National Geographic Society, the others are the property of the lecturers and while they would probably not be available for theatrical use still an interest expressed in such films would eventually lead to more theatrical distributors being willing to undertake the distribution of other thrilling film records of notable adventures.

A Minister as a Movie Maker

By HELEN LOCKWOOD COFFIN

Better Films Committees may find in this story of a minister's motion picture activity helpful suggestions for arousing and holding the interest of the young people of their community. For entertaining them and teaching them good citizenship no better way could be found. This article is reprinted through the courtesy of the "Movie Makers" of the Amateur Cinema League.—
EDITOR'S NOTE.

BOYS and their dogs; girls and their dolls; building activities; our fishing industry; the Exchange Club; the Woman's Club; high tides and oil field fires; yacht wrecks and races; Memorial Day for Seafarers; a rum raid; basket-ball on the school grounds—these are a few of the local reels which Rev. W. H. Stockton, an amateur movie operator, has used as tools in the social service of the Community Methodist Church in Newport Beach, California.

His is a peculiar field; two tiny resort towns three miles apart, directly on the open and public beach of the Pacific Ocean; the Mecca of countless thousands during the summer, the all-year residence of a few hundreds. In each town he has charge of a chapel and divides his time between them. All told, the actual membership upon which he can depend is thirty-five people. Week-ends all through the year bring the crowds of itinerant pleasure seekers. Fishing, boat-building and renting rooms and houses to the visitors are the main industries. Sunday is the great day of business and pleasure. Most of the property owners live and vote elsewhere. Recreation is the end and purpose of almost every man, woman and child in the place. There are few common ties, little community spirit, to bind the people together. Shifting like the sands on the shore, casual, gay-hearted, holiday-ing, it has been a problem to develop concerted interest and concerted action.

When he first was appointed to this parish two years ago, Mr. Stockton found very little organized social activity for the community, in general. There were two woman's clubs, an Exchange Club, a chamber of commerce, a yacht club; but these were more or less limited in their appeal. There were Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, but neither group touched all the youngsters. He had been a Scoutmaster and also specialized in other ways in the work with young people. His experience had taught him that one of the easiest ways to reach them was by moving pictures, and since he knew that older people are merely boys and girls grown tall, he conceived the idea of trying what a series of weekly picture nights would do for them.

A former parishioner, who had lost her two sons by death, had given him an outfit as a memorial to them—a camera, a projector, a screen and various accessories. He began at once with what he calls a weekly "community social night" in each church. These are continuing their successful appeal even now, after a "run" of unbroken weekly appearances for over two years. He rents a few reels, usually planning on having a travelogue, always a comedy, sometimes a scientific, or other informative picture, and once in a while a "straight" story. But his mainstay in the social service field has been his locals.

Whenever anything happens in his territory, Mr. Stockton and his movie camera are on the spot at once. Twice the oil refinery staged a spectacular night fire and he caught some thrilling views. In January of succeeding years unusually high tides inundated the boardwalk and streets, washed out the jetty and wrecked fishing barges and yachts. Mr. Stockton's film caught all. When a new building is projected he gets a shot of the old building or the open space where the new one is to go. From time to

time he takes pictures showing the wrecking of the old and the growing of the new, of course featuring the workmen, the owners and all responsible for the improvements. Every local celebration is recorded. Every celebrity who comes to town gets his picture taken. Every local organization takes its turn in the limelight. The church societies and their meetings are, of course, often recorded. In fact, local history is caught and held in the records while it is making.

There is sound psychology in this. The chief interest of mankind is man. Every one of us is particularly concerned with the things he does and has part in, and is fascinated when he has a chance, such as these local films give him, of seeing himself in action. When it is announced that such and such local scenes will be on the screen, every man, woman and child concerned in the action is there to see how he looks. The little church auditorium is crowded. Each meeting has its other features of community singing, friendly intercourse, story telling, games and educational reels. The selection of these gives the pastor many a fine opportunity to put across some needed lesson or suggestion.

The greatest good, however, may be said to come from the silent lessons unwound from the local reels. As an example, take the pictures Mr. Stockton has shown of boys and their dogs. He takes them from time to time, as he has opportunity. He knows how dear a dog is to the boy owner's heart. At the very word "go," he and that boy meet on common ground. They co-operate to present this beloved dog at his very best. Comes a time when Mr. Stockton finds he has enough of these boys and dogs to make a full reel. He pieces them together and shows them as a special feature for some particular night. Mothers and fathers come to see their own hopefuls and meet the mothers and fathers of other stars. Here is common ground. That night Mr. Stockton builds his program around this theme; subtly, mostly by suggestion, he calls attention to how many boys are growing up

in this city. Perhaps he drops a hint as to what the city might do to help them—playgrounds, reading rooms or something like that. He mentions, perhaps, that these boys are the citizens of tomorrow. This starts people thinking—thinking along common lines.

Or take the babies. He "shoots" every baby in town, just as soon as he hears of its arrival. He returns often and "shoots" it again and again; he especially tries to get it when it begins to creep, when it takes its first step and so on. Then when he has a full reel he has a "baby night." Can you imagine a mother of one of the "stars" not being there to see that reel? "Here," he says, as the babies roll around and smile and creep through the pictures, "we have Newport of Tomorrow. These are the little folks for whom we of Today are building. Let us think about what kind of a city we want this to be for them to live in."

He is very wise about not pressing the lessons home too hard. Just a word, just a hint; he lets the pictures do the rest.

Consider what it means to the citizenship at large when on the screen he shows them the record of the town history they are making. In every city there are pessimists—people who wear blue glasses and see storms coming. Mr. Stockton gives them some needed doses of optimism when he shows the new buildings going up, the beautifying being done, the improvements being made. Sometimes mistakes, intentional or otherwise, are made by those in authority. The average citizen, the tax-payer, usually knows little about these errors. But when he sees them on the screen his personal interest is aroused, he wants to know how and why these things happened and who is responsible, and how they can be remedied.

In these cases, too, this pastor is wise and says little. Again he lets the film tell the story.

The financing of these programs is by free-will offerings. Collections are taken
(Continued on page 15)

The Motion Picture Wins in Collegiate Favor

THE Columbia Spectator, student daily of Columbia University, published recently the results of a survey conducted among groups as to student interests.

Replies of 308 students showed convincingly that it is the cinema house, not the museum, the opera, the concert or lecture hall, that gets the major share of the students' time and interest.

All but five of the 308 replying acknowledged that several hours of each week were passed in the neighborhood motion picture theatres and 306 had attended the downtown Broadway theatres. Less than a half had ever attended the programs of the Institute of Arts and Sciences and only 52 had ever witnessed the productions of the University experimental dramatic organizations.

More than 100 had never been inside the New York Public Library and only 25 had ever heard of the Morgan Library. The Metropolitan Museum of Art had never been visited by over a hundred and about one half had failed to include the American Museum of Natural History among their New York interests.

About one third had attended one performance of the Metropolitan Opera House and 150 or so attended occasional symphony concerts. About 150 had been to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

For the theatre which comes nearest in interest to the motion picture two-thirds of the number had been to one or more productions of the Theatre Guild, although less than 50 had been to The Civic Repertory Theatre of the Eva Le Gallienne company.

This causes one to wonder if the high favor given the motion picture is because it is a happy relaxation from study hours, an entertainment always at hand, widely ballyhooed and easily located, or is the mo-

Book Notes

Recording Sound for Motion Pictures

Edited by Lester Cowan for the
Academy of Motion Picture Arts and
Sciences

THIS book grew out of a series of lectures given by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the joint association of technicians, artists and producers. The lectures were given by a group of sound experts for studio employees and they have been revised and expanded into a book each designed to serve as a textbook on its subject.

Each chapter is contributed by a practical expert, and the book covers sound recording equipment (describing different systems and methods), the film record, studio acoustics and technique, and sound reproduction. It seems to be technical enough to give a basic knowledge of sound recording to anyone who wants to put such knowledge into practice, and it is certainly interesting enough to give the general reader who is curious, an idea of the mechanics that are involved in the production of the new sound motion picture.—J.S.H.

McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., \$5.00.

tion picture, with its dramatic characterization, its spectacle of pageantry, its presentation of historical epic considered as a source of added education. If the questionnaire were carried further into the "why" undoubtedly the former would be the prevailing answer. Anyway this preference offers a challenge to the motion picture, for here is an audience trained to be critical and likely to about-face in their enthusiasm if the screen fails to maintain its interest.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional* and *Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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EVELYN GERSTEIN

LOUISE WALLACE HACKNEY

FRANCES TAYLOR PATTERSON

J. K. PAULDING

CREIGHTON PEET

CLARENCE A. PERRY

WALTER W. PETTIT

HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN

JOHN ALFRED THOMAS

The Beggar's Opera (Die Dreigroschenoper)

Based on John Gay's operetta, directed by G. W. Pabst, photographed by F. A. Wagner, with a cast including Rudolf Forster, Carola Neher, Fritz Rasp, Valeska Gert, Lotte Lenje and Ernst Busch. Produced by Warner Bros.-Tobis, distributed by Warner Bros.

ANY work of art that is sound is also abundant and provides food for all sorts of appetites. *The Beggar's Opera* is an intelligently conceived and ingeniously executed piece of work, the kind of film that comes, happily, now and then to stimulate and revive one's interest in the motion picture as a whole. It is not a work of perfection, certainly, being overlong and sometimes faltering both in spirit and in the appropriate pace. Its story moves to something of an anticlimax and, even for those who understand German well, is difficult to follow. But it is so rich in merits that it delightfully enables a film-goer to forget a score of those catch-penny movies—dull and mean in spirit, often lacking even in story or in technical interest, concerning situations and characters that are

stale and untrue to life—which are all too horribly with us.

This *Beggar's Opera* has really little resemblance to John Gay's 18th century musical play that deftly satirized governmental corruption under Sir Robert Walpole, and put its finger effectively on human weaknesses. This new satire on the powers that be and on human nature is Gay freely rewritten, and the witty and haunting music is original. Its hero is a gay crook in a derby whose behavior is much like that of the rakish highwayman of the older tale. Human nature has not changed.

But we might just as well forget Gay altogether, and take this on its own credit.

Here is an extravaganza in Hogarthian vein, but dressed out in deliciously exaggerated late 19th century costumes, and set in a romantic London underworld that never was. Its rather imaginative *décor* of wharfside and slum is designed and lighted cunningly, and the camera moves freely through this world as a camera should. Pictorially, it is often striking and sometimes beautiful.

The story is a rough framework to hold the shrewd and deep characterization, to give an excuse for the play of a full-bodied humor, to permit of a series of audacious and diverting

BULLETIN

THIS MONTH

Exceptional

The Beggar's Opera

Le Million

Honorable Mention

Cain and Artem

PREVIOUS MONTHS

1931

Exceptional

Cimarron

City Lights

Comrades of 1918

Rango

Sous les Toits de Paris

Tabu

Trader Horn

Honorable Mention

The Blue Angel

City Streets

A Connecticut

Yankee

Dishonored

East Lynne

Father's Son

The Front Page

The Public Enemy

Quick Millions

Skippy

Ten Cents a Dance

incidents through which the whole-heartedly reprobate characters can build up a comment on society such as is hardly ever afforded by the less realistic and rather pompously moral gangster films we generally see. Not for one moment does the moralizing attitude enter: nobody repents: all ends well for every crook. Yet the onlooker laughs deeply and then shudders at these vivid inhabitants of crookdom. They *are* crooks, not heroes in disguise.

Shortly, the action concerns Peachum, protector and head of the beggars' combine, and Messer, head of the thieves'. The Chief of Police is over-friendly with both. When Messer makes a runaway match with Peachum's daughter Polly, Peachum is furious and threatens the Chief of Police that if he does not arrest Messer, he will march his army of beggars into the midst of a state procession to welcome Royalty. Messer is

betrayed by jealous Jenny, a resident in the sordid mock-luxury of a house of the underworld that is a favorite resort of his. Before she can repent and contrive his escape from prison, Peachum still believing him at large has set his beggars on the march. But Polly (unscrupulously feminine baggage of the kind Bernard Shaw often draws) was a good wife. She and some of her husband's underlings had meanwhile obtained control of a great banking institution. The story ends (after Royalty has hidden its face behind white roses in horror at sight of the beggars) with Peachum and Polly, the Chief of Police and Messer, all directors of the Bank.

This film is cast with generosity and perfection. Long after seeing it, Fritz Rasp as Peachum, Valeska Gert as the dazzlingly horrible Mrs. Peachum, the audacious Polly of Carola Neher, and Rudolf Forster as



The bridal of the Beggar King's daughter in "The Beggar's Opera."

the swaggering Messer remain as vividly in memory as figures from Goya. The lesser parts are played with equal effect. In the hilarious scene where Messer orders his thieves to arrange a fitting wedding feast, one of them strips a wax mannequin in a store of her bridal attire and with an inexpressible look raises his hat apologetically to her as he departs. This whole sequence is treated in short, well-paced scenes with such gusto, that every picture and each bit of acting accumulate to prepare us for the mock-lyricism of the wedding scene itself. The film throughout has been *composed*. One word of especial comment is due to Ernst Busch as the ballad singer with a wonderful voice whose appearance at intervals during the piece is a delight. The diction of all the players is remarkably clear, and Lotte Lenje as Jenny sings a brilliant little song so as to make all hearers wonder they ever rated Miss Dietrich so highly at this half-said half-sung sort of performance.

This necessarily curtailed account of a film that is unusually packed with interest refers to the uncut version. As shown at the Warner Theatre, apparently censorship had necessitated the elimination of one important and memorable sequence, and the cutting or muffling of several speeches that for all their wit were salted frankly with sentiments and expressions appropriate to the characters and redolent of a truculent attitude to and frank disparagement of law and order. Obviously a mutilated film seems less worth praise than a complete one: but any piece of *The Beggar's Opera* will still retain matter to stimulate the eye, the ear and the imagination, even should it shock a susceptibility now and then.—I. B.

Le Million

From the play by G. Barr and M. Guillemaud. Scenario and direction by René Clair. With a cast including René Lefebvre, Louis Allibert, Annabella, Paul Ollivier and Constantin Stroesco. Produced by Tobis. Distributed by Forenfilms, Inc.

OLD-TIME theatre-goers may have a dim memory of a farce that appeared years ago, with Eugene O'Brien in the first flush of leading-manhood, long before his heyday as a movie idol. It is the same farce *The Million*, that now reappears as the basis for René Clair's newest motion picture—but a vastly different thing on the screen under René Clair's witty and enlivening direction. M. Clair's alert eye has caught many amusing things in life and in the movies, and he has woven them into this simply old plot with a dexterous, slightly satiric and entirely up-to-date fashion.

The plot has to do with a lost lottery ticket, and the picture is mostly the long and hilarious chase for it and the fortune it means to its owner. It has been left in the pocket of a coat which a thief uses as a means to escape the police. The coat gets into a collection of junk and old clothes, where it is bought by an operatic tenor for part of his costume in "The Bohemians." It always remains a jump ahead of those who are pursuing it, who include the owner, a friend of his who wants the ticket for his own purposes, two girls whom they have separately involved in the chase, and eventually a gang of thieves who have no idea what they are after but think it must be worth looking into on account of all the fuss made about it.

The chase winds up at the opera house and comes to a climax during the performance of the opera, and in the meantime the numberless creditors of the young artist who has so suddenly become a millionaire, unaware of the loss of the



lottery ticket, have advanced him enormous further credit for the purpose of a grand party, which they are celebrating while the pursuit goes on. Of course everything comes out as it should.

The whole thing is indescribably gay and amusing, done in a style that is partly French, but chiefly René Clair's own. He is a cinematic master, this director, with an individuality which Americans have already had a chance to note in his *Sous les Toits de Paris*. In *Le Million* he has gone in for fewer subtleties—just swift straight comedy that flirts with what is sometimes rather contemptuously called slap-stick. Through it all he has scattered some lively tunes that quicken the pace rather than halt it, and in his rapid stride he manages, lightly but pointedly, to have some fun with various things: with greed and infidelity, to name the more serious ones, with gangsters and gangster films, with football and collegiate films, and most gleefully of all with that solemn old institution, grand opera. His treatment of grand opera has been called a burlesque—a gorgeous one, but burlesque. As a matter of fact he has simply done his grand opera straight—no burlesque could be so funny as his tenor and prima donna and baritone singing away exactly as they do on the most dignified of operatic stages. It is one of the funniest scenes the screen has produced.

Though the dialogue is in French no one need stay away from the picture through fear of not understanding it. A simple but effectual and unobtrusive device has been followed to keep the course of the plot clear to those who do not understand the language—an English commentator explains the story to a friend as it goes along, in the choicest would-be Oxfordese.

If a funnier, more original and individual screen comedy is to be looked for to follow *Le Million*, there is no one in sight to expect it from but René Clair himself.—J. S. H.

Cain and Artem

Based on the story by Maxim Gorki; directed by P. P. Petrov-Bytov; photographed by Nikolai Ushakov; with a cast including Emil Gall, Nikolai Simonov and Elena Egorova. Produced by Sovkino, distributed by Amkino.

IN this Russian film, based on Maxim Gorki's story, the theme turns away from the mass-hero back again to the individual. Propaganda is missing, and if there is a social message it seems to be that men should love their brothers and band together for tolerance and justice in a world oftentimes all too brutal and harassing. In Artem, the buffeted but gentle little Jewish shoe-mender, Cain, the giant, the swaggerer, braggart, and wastrel, ultimately finds the friend who leads him to the ways of peace, hope and social living. These characters are effectively portrayed by Nikolai Simonov and Emil Gall. In the case of Artem, played by Simonov, the timid yet spiritually brave tinker of the streets is presented with appeal that engages the sympathy from the first, and in Cain, the portrait emerges at points with power and distinction and with a kind of Samson-like savageness.

All in all, *Cain and Artem* takes us back to the more primitive of the Russian films, particularly *Polikushka*, although it does not possess the integrity and dramatic force of that crude but moving masterpiece. Still it insists that we look on people as people, not as units in an organism moving from chaos to order in a new world of sweetness and light provided by the machine. This is refreshing, even though the scene is one of squalor and sordid waste, for we need to be persuaded of nothing but that we are looking at human beings, and this the excellent cast is fully able to do, being composed of Russian actors.

There are gripping and cinematic moments in *Cain and Artem*, such as the one where Cain and another giant of the market-place engage to pull each other off

*The two
oddly assorted
friends
in
"Cain and Artem."*



(Continued from page 9)

the roof in a tug-of-war with a rope, and the night scene where Cain is almost murdered by the thugs engaged by the husband of the woman who is in love with Cain, and whose death by suicide contributes somewhat to his reform. Hers too is a finely played character by Elena Egorova. The film throughout is convincing, although the action is not smooth-running at all times. But it has the stamp of struggle and spiritual conflict, and it engenders the sense of actuality that lifts the Russian cinema so high in intensity and dramatic quality.—*W. A. B.*

each night. Films for the local reels are paid by merchants or others interested. They are given credit on the reel, with a snap or two of them and their work. The average attendance at these social evenings has been ninety-two—a capacity house for the seating facilities. The clientele is not a wealthy one. The people in the audience have little money. Yet for the entire period of their showing, these social nights have been self-supporting. Of course, all that they are expected to do in the financial way is to pay their own expenses. No one expects to make any money out of them.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

WITH so many new Better Films Committees forming perhaps a suggestion will be timely from the Atlanta (Ga.) Better Films Committee Bulletin. Addressing new members, representatives of organizations, through the Bulletin, the President, Mrs. Patrick Bray says, "You are expected to attend all luncheons of the Committee, the fourth Thursday of every month (they have their monthly meetings in this social manner). Be prepared to make a brief verbal report on whatever work you have done in the interest of better films since the preceding luncheon if called upon by the Extension Chairman. To take a message back to your organization at each meeting of what the Better Films Committee is endeavoring to do toward improving pictures shown on our screens—it is the work of these wonderful organizations, the D. A. R., the United Daughters of the Confederacy, all patriotic and civic clubs to see to it that the desirable type of film is that which yields profit at the box office and that the undesirable picture is profitless. In organized public support behind the clean pictures lies the answer to the problem of improvement."

To individual members is addressed this paragraph: "To attend all luncheons and to make careful reviews and reports on the pictures assigned to you. To commend good pictures, encouraging attendance upon them, interesting groups to attend special pictures endorsed by the Committee, and keeping absolute silence on those which do not meet with its approval—the public, especially the young people, will soon learn to trust your judgment and ask for your suggestions. The theatre managers appreciate our good words for good pictures."

And to associate members the following: "As we are limited by our Constitution and By-Laws to one hundred active mem-

bers all those who cannot keep abreast with the demands made upon the active members will find a place on the associate list—attending our luncheons whenever possible, our bridge parties, social gatherings, commending the pictures endorsed by the Committee—being a member of the Committee without specified duties. In only one way can the improvement in pictures and public entertainment that we are striving for be obtained—team work on the right track."

A recent recommendation came before the Executive Board of the Committee to have a 30-minute period before the monthly luncheon in which to hear the reading of the minutes, and all special reports of business, avoiding the necessity of such haste with this interesting part of the work as seemed necessary in the past. The luncheons start at 12:30, closing at 1:30, giving ample time to the program.

This Committee has been having a very active season, with its Speakers' Bureau busily bringing the work of the Committee before groups and organizations. Speakers from the Bureau are prepared to go to different organizations and give 5-minute talks bringing the Committee's activity before the group in the manner most interesting to them.

An important group appointed by the president is the Junior Review Committee, composed of some of the younger women of the organization. Mrs. Alonzo Richardson, Secretary of the Committee, who was one of the speakers at the Annual Conference of the National Board, told of this work there as well as many other phases of the Committee's work. She was the speaker at the February meeting of the Committee reporting to her associates on the National Board's Conference.

The visual education section of the Conference interested Mrs. Richardson particu-

larly as the Atlanta Committee has done so much along this line. Mr. E. R. Enlow who heads the Department of Visual Education of the Public Schools is chairman of Visual Education of the Committee. At the March meeting he made several announcements of interest. One that a 16 mm. projector and new films had been secured for use in the public schools. He also announced the gift of two films for the schools: Mr. and Mrs. Asa G. Candler of Atlanta, who recently returned from a journey around the world made in their own airplane, have contributed films made by them of this trip which will be used for the benefit of the children by the Visual Education Department. Douglas Fairbanks has contributed the use of *Robin Hood* to the Department of Visual Education in the Public Schools, the picture having been worked over and made more suitable for this purpose and given a new title, *In the Days of Chivalry*. Visual education as a part of the regular school system is an ideal towards which the Better Films Committee is working and one which has already met with gratifying success.

The pastor of one of the Baptist churches is chairman of the Church Co-operation Committee and lately he has secured the interest of 5 additional ministers as members of the Committee.

There are many activities of this Committee all running, writes Mrs. Bray, the president, on "greased wheels" but she and her associates are not satisfied with this and are continually introducing new angles of interest and contact.

RUTHERFORD, New Jersey, may well feel proud of its Better Films Committee whose fame seems to be far reaching. Mrs. Harry G. Grover, the president of the Committee was recently the guest speaker at Chester, Pa., of a motion picture conference of the Women's Clubs of Delaware County (Pa.). Mrs. Grover spoke to a well attended and enthusiastic

audience of representatives of forty clubs who have appointed motion picture chairmen to carry on a constructive program of education and support for the better films. The work of the Junior Better Films Committee was outlined by Mrs. Grover at a meeting of the Chester Y. W. C. A. and the plans were received with such interest that a junior review group is to be organized among the members of that association.

While speaking of junior work a word of the latest happenings in the Rutherford group would be timely. *Moana*, the delightful film of Samoan life, was the feature of a special showing sponsored by the Junior Review Committee, the first of a series which they plan for the future. A most enjoyable social event on their program during the past month was a tea to which the committee invited twenty-five guests from the high school who are prospective members for the coming year to fill the vacancies left by the graduating class in June. Questions were asked and the pictures *Stolen Heaven* and *The Finger Points* were discussed by the members to demonstrate their method of procedure. The gratifying interest the community takes in this phase of the local better films work is encouraging—only recently the pastor of the Congregational Church assured the parent group that he would be glad to have the young people of his parish organize a Junior Better Films Committee.

As the Rutherford Committee has tried many plans for presenting children's programs their new matinee plan perhaps will be of interest. Because of the increasing attractiveness and suitability of the regular week-end program to the tastes of the children, and because it did not seem advisable for any child to see two performances in one day, the extra morning matinee has been discontinued and in its place the junior matinee precedes the regular Saturday matinee. It is hoped that this arrangement may help the parents as well as the children by giving the little people their entertainment before the matinee showing of the

week-end features, so that if the parents are willing to allow their children to see the whole performance they may do so. After the special showing there is a short intermission which is the sign for those children who are allowed to attend only the junior show to leave. Among the features shown recently have been *With Byrd at the South Pole*, at which time Bernt Balchen the pilot of the expedition gave a most interesting talk, *Red Fork Range*, *Wild Men of Kalibali*, *Redskin*, *Mister Antonio*, *Kivalina of the Icelands*, *Chang*, *The Lady of the Lake*, together with selected short subjects.

Through the courtesy of the management of their local theatre the Better Films Committee have held two most enjoyable theatre parties for their friends—the features being the fantasy *Outward Bound* and the historical epic *Cimarron*. In their effort to create interest in the unusual and exceptional films an invitational showing of *Love, Life and Nature*, a picture describing the origin and development of life was sponsored, the picture being secured from the National Board.

Professor Lawrence Winchell, lecturer on visual education of Rutgers University and one of the speakers at the 1931 Annual Conference of the National Board was the honor guest at the April meeting of the Committee and brought many interesting facts regarding the use of motion pictures in the schools to his audience.

Two very interesting pictures were shown in connection with Professor Winchell's address, *The Frontier Woman*, one of the Chronicles of America Films, showing how the film might be used in teaching history in the junior high school, and *The Barefoot Boy*, an animal picture with a dog as the hero demonstrated an ideal way to present nature study to primary children in the city.

INTERESTING examples of the varied and successful matinees that have been held by the Macon (Ga.) Better Films Committee offer suggestion.

With no equipment for visual education in the Macon schools the Committee's plan of presenting the Yale Chronicles of America Series is most interesting. One or two episodes of the series are shown a month and anyone interested may procure a card on which numbers, 15 in all, are listed, and at each matinee where one of the Chronicles is shown one number is punched. At the end of the presentation of the series those having all 15 numbers punched will receive a six-months pass to the matinees; 12 numbers a three-months pass; 10 numbers a one-month pass. In showing these historical films the Committee is actuated by a desire to provide the people of Macon with the opportunity of seeing pictures they can see in no other way, and to co-operate with the schools in giving the teachers and students the privilege schools equipped with motion picture screens have of seeing in connection with their study of history these Chronicles.

In celebration of the birthday of Louisa M. Alcott, *Little Women*, the best known and best beloved Alcott story, was the feature for the morning matinee. Through the courtesy of Paramount-Publix Corporation, who sent their laboratory print, the film was made available. The prologue for this matinee consisted of a pantomime-tableau of eight scenes from "Little Women"—The Letter from Father, Christmas Gifts to Mother, Preparations for the Ball, Jo Meets Laurie, Meg's Wedding, Beth's Illness, Back from the Honeymoon and Under the Umbrella, presented by the Jennie Daughtry School of Expression. In order that the "little men" attending the performance might feel their importance 100 overseas caps were given as souvenirs through the co-operation of the city manager of the Paramount-Publix.

The "little women" of Macon came to the fore again at one of the matinees when a doll show was held with prizes for the prettiest, largest, smallest, oldest and most unusual doll exhibited. The feature picture

on this occasion was the popular fairy tale *The Wizard of Oz*.

The young matinee organist has during the season provided programs honoring the anniversaries of famous composers and musicians which have included selections from De Koven's "Robin Hood," the Andante movement from the "First Sonata" of Mozart, numbers from Victor Herbert's operas, and selections celebrating the birthdays of Fritz Kreisler and Walter Damrosch.

There are Apple Blossom Festivals—Orange Festivals—Rose Festivals—but Georgia celebrates in honor of its own Ol' King Cotton every year and this year the Cotton Festival was the occasion for a most entertaining junior matinee at which Junior King Cotton reigned seated on a cotton bale throne and surrounded by his loyal subjects. A Junior Style Show was conducted for His Majesty's pleasure, the cotton models being furnished by one of the local stores. These wearers of Georgia's chief product were rewarded with titles and knighthoods by the King for their loyalty after which a picture program was given consisting of *The Frontier Woman*, a Chronicle of America, in honor of Mother's Day, and a short subject, *Confessions of a Cold*.

A most unique attendance prize was offered on May 23rd when Douglas Fairbanks' birthday was the occasion for a celebration. It was three original crayon drawings of "Doug" on one piece of paper on which there were also several bars of music by the composer of the score for *The Thief of Bagdad* and the baton with which he directed the orchestra the night of the premiere. The prize was donated by Norris Wilcox, a half-brother of Douglas Fairbanks, who lived in Macon for many years.

Philanthropy plays a leading part in this Committee's plan of work as a quotation from a letter of the superintendent of one of Macon's charitable institutions indicates: "We appreciate very much your kindness and consideration in giving the children of the Methodist Orphans' Home an invitation

to attend any or all of the special Saturday morning movie programs. . . . We consider this a great help to our children in providing entertainment for them to which they look forward with great pleasure from week to week."

The following films have recently formed parts of the matinee programs: *Tom Sawyer*, *Along Came Youth*, *Cohens and the Kellys in Africa*, *Sky Hawk*, *The Sap from Syracuse*, *Doughboys*, *Near Rainbow's End*, *The Sophomore*, *The Big Trail*, *With Byrd at the South Pole*; among the short subjects have been: *The Patient*, *Heart of Robert E. Lee*, *Benjamin Franklin*, *Movie Memories*, *Laundry Blues*, *Charles Dickens*, *Ton of Trouble*, *Shipmates*, *Olympic Games (Our Gang)*, *Hand to Mouth*, *Mickey's Musketeers*; the serials for the past season were *The Indians Are Coming* and *The Spell of the Circus*. . .

THE Columbus (O.) Motion Picture Council holds its regular meetings quarterly but so much of interest and helpfulness is packed into a program that it furnishes an incentive for activity and helpful information for months to come. The first meeting of the 1931 season had as speakers Dr. Samuel Renshaw, Professor of Experimental Psychology at Ohio State University, who spoke on "Influences of Motion Pictures on Children's Sleep" and used lantern slides for illustrations. Another speaker was Dr. Charles Scott Berry, Director of the Bureau of Special Education, also of Ohio State University. Dr. Berry was Chairman of the Committee on Special Classes of President Hoover's White House Conference. The subject of his address was "The Adolescent and the Motion Picture." Ministers and directors of social, educational and welfare organizations were requested to announce this meeting and its purpose to their respective groups.

The final meeting of the season was held on May 22nd, the speaker being Dr.

A. G. Schatzman, pastor of one of the leading Methodist Episcopal Churches in the city. Some excerpts from the talk by Dr. Schatzman have been sent to us by Mrs. Christian C. Gross, the newly elected president of the Council, who served as vice-president under the former president. As they contain pertinent thoughts for all interested in the movement for the support of good pictures, we are recording them here.

He said, "It always takes more sacrifice and effort to bring about any reform—to do a constructive piece of work—than to criticize. . . . What is the responsibility of the Motion Pictures? Their function is to break monotony. There are times when we need to retreat into a fantasy world. Harm comes when we introduce the fantasy into real life. In such pictures as *The Big House*, and *All Quiet on the Western Front* something more has been done than simply to amuse. . . . The big thing is the responsibility of the Motion Picture to the child. Whenever a little child gets reality mixed up with the fantastical so that it does not know the difference, we are sinning against that little child. It has not a critical factor developed by experience. . . . We should as parents take the films our children see more seriously. Because for the child these ideas are real therefore educational. . . . Our efforts should be to try to create a higher taste among theatre-goers."

Mrs. Gross, who is very much interested in the policy of stressing the commendation of the good films—not criticizing the poor ones—says that she is interested in hearing from others in this same work therefore we are giving her address, 66 18th Avenue, Columbus, Ohio, so that there may result perhaps a mutually helpful interchange of ideas and plans.

The purpose and objects of the Council are: "To serve as a guide in the selection and promotion of motion pictures that are suitable for children and family entertainment, and to publish and broad-

cast their findings; and to foster a demand and promote pictures that are educational, historical and patriotic in character." This Council, as we have previously reported, grew out of a D. A. R. chapter better films committee and because of fine leadership and interest there became a community committee broadcasting over the air and by other means, information to the entire city regarding good films.

AN interest in better films is increasingly becoming a part of the program of different organizations. We learn of a new interest from Mrs. A. S. Kreider, Chairman of the Educational Department of the Elizabeth Hughes Society, of her city, in a letter in which she says, "The Elizabeth Hughes Society of Elizabethtown (Pa.) is sponsoring a series of Junior Matinees on Saturday afternoons and also one night a month during the week when an especially good picture for adults will be shown. We are fortunate in securing the co-operation of the Order of the Moose, which runs the local theatre here. The next thing we need, of course," she wisely adds, "is the co-operation of the townspeople."

MRS. John I. McGuigan, who is Pennsylvania State Chairman of Motion Pictures for the Federation of Women's Clubs and the D. A. R., declared in a recent address that she was delighted with the present improvements in productions and that the only way to bring really good pictures before the public is to advertise them and let the mediocre pictures take care of themselves. She stressed the idea of "selection" or emphasis on the best, saying: "It is only human nature to be curious about what is forbidden. In listing mediocre pictures as such we only give them attention which they do not merit. The better policy would be to emphasize only the productions which are worthwhile."

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

EDITOR

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIOUS INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

ALWAYS GOODBYE—Written by Kate McLaughlin, directed by Kenneth McKenna and William Cameron Menzies with a cast including Elissa Landi, Lewis Stone, Paul Cavanaugh, John Garrick and Frederick Kerr. Fox, 6 reels. The story of a delicately bred girl whose sudden poverty seems to condemn her to a permanent farewell to happiness. She becomes innocently involved with a deceptive gentleman who is really a crook, but things straighten out in the end. Elissa Landi proves that she needs only a good story to show that she is an unusually effective and charming actress. *Mature audience.*

LA CANZONE DELL'AMORE (The Song of Love)—Based on Luigi Pirandello's play "Silence," directed by G. Righelli, with a cast including Elip Steiner and Dria Paola. Produced by Cines Pittaluga, distributed by Savoy Pictures, 9 reels. A beautifully made and acted picture from Italy, with Italian dialogue and a lovely Roman setting. The plot concerns the misunderstandings and sorrows arising from a girl's undertaking to bring up her illegitimate baby brother. *Mature audience.*

EVERYTHING'S ROSIE—Written by Al Boasberg, directed by Clyde Bruckman, with a cast including Robert Woolsey, Anita Louise, John Darrow and Florence Roberts. RKO Radio Pictures, 8 reels. A conventional plot of a vagabond who adopts a sweet little orphan, who grows up into a sweet young lady and marries a nice rich young man. It is amusing for those who like Robert Woolsey, who plays a carnival mountebank, driven from town to town, with his customary cigar and swagger and giggly old wise-cracks. Reminiscent of W. C. Fields in a similar story. *Family audience.*

A FREE SOUL—From the novel by Adela Rogers St. John, directed by Clarence Brown, starring Norma Shearer, supported by Lionel Barrymore, Clark Gable, Leslie Howard, James Gleason, Lucy Beaumont and Claire Whitney. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 10 reels. The story of a girl who gets into a mess by following her father's unconventional code of freedom. Sex is more subordinated to plot than in recent Norma Shearer pictures. Excellently directed and acted, with Lionel Barrymore standing out in an impressive performance of the traditional theatrical kind. Effective melodrama with occasional bits of silliness. *Mature audience.*

THE GOOD BAD GIRL—Story by Winifred Van Duser, directed by R. William Neill, with a cast including Mae Clarke, Marie Prevost, James Hall, Paul Porcasi and Nance O'Neil. Columbia, 7 reels. An emotionally effective story of a racketeer's girl and her attempt to live a respectable life. Conventional standards interrupt her happiness for a time. The picture's attitude toward light morals is hardly to be called strict—the gangster element is not given special emphasis. The acting of Mae Clarke is notably sincere and moving, and there is one of the most delightful babies ever shown on the screen. *Mature audience.*

THE LAWYER'S SECRET—From the novel by James Hilary Finn, directed by Louis Gasnier and Max Marcin, with a cast including Clive Brook, Richard Arlen, Charles Rogers, Fay Wray and Jean Arthur. Paramount, 7 reels. An interesting picture full of suspense, of a young man wrongfully accused of murder and a lawyer whose professional situation is complicated by his having received in confidence the real facts of the crime. Well directed and acted, with "Buddy" Rogers playing an effective part quite out of his usual line. *Mature audience.*

LOVER COME BACK—Written by Helen Topping Miller, directed by Earle C. Kenton, with a cast including Betty Bronson, Constance Cummings and Jack Mulhall. Columbia, 7 reels. The story of a boy who chooses a sweet and old-fashioned girl for a wife instead of a modern sophisticated one—and chooses wrong. The modern girl has to wait for him to find out his mistake. Betty Bronson is a happy surprise in an unusual role for her. *Mature audience.*

THE MYSTERY OF LIFE—*Adopted from scientific sources, directed by George Cochrane. Universol, 8 reels.* An interesting and instructive pictorial explanation of evolution. Clarence Darrow gives the accompanying lecture, which covers the development of animal life from its lowest to its highest forms. *Family audience.*

NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET—*From the novel by Peter B. Kyne, directed by W. S. Van Dyke, with a cast including Leslie Howard, Conchita Montenegro, Karen Morley, C. Aubrey Smith and Clyde Cook. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels.* The rather worn plot of a white man going to pieces in the tropics. It is well directed and intelligently acted, and fails to be entirely gripping only because the story does not seem important. Conchita Montenegro and Karen Morley, two rather unfamiliar actresses, both give striking performances. *Mature audience.*

SIX CYLINDER LOVE—*From the play by William Anthony McGuire, directed by Thornton Freeland, with a cast including Spencer Tracy, Lorin Boker, Sidney Fox, William Collier, Sr., El Brendel and Una Merkel. Fox, 7 reels.* A mild but amusing comedy of how living up to an expensive car almost ruined a young married couple. Rather old-fashioned, but full of entertaining situations and characterizations, among which that contributed by Spencer Tracy stands out especially. *Family audience.*

LA STRANIERA (The Stranger)—*Based on a novel by Alexandre Dumas, Fils, directed by Amleto Talerini, featuring Tino Tattonzi. Produced by Cines Pittalugo, distributed by Capitol Film Exchange, 7 reels.* A well directed and well acted picture with Italian dialogue. It concerns a woman who almost wrecked the lives of two young lovers and repented in time to set things right. *Mature audience.*

THREE LOVES—*Based on a novel by Max Brod, directed by Kurt Bernhardt, with a cast including Marlene Dietrich, Fritz Kortner and Uno Henning. Distributed by Associated Cinemas, 8 reels.* A film made in Germany, without dialogue but with synchronized musical accompaniment. Particularly interesting for those who would like to see Marlene Dietrich as she was before coming to America. The heroine lives in terror of the man who freed her from a loathsome husband by killing him. A young man tries to help her escape, but the difficulties are too great and the end is tragic. Well directed and acted, with effective photography. *Mature audience.*

UP FOR MURDER—*Written and directed by Monta Bell, with a cast including Lew Ayres and Genevieve Tobin. Universol, 7 reels.* A cub reporter in love with the beautiful society editor of a newspaper becomes involved in a murder. To save the girl's reputation he refuses to talk and is condemned to die. A trite plot but well done and interesting. *Mature audience.*

THE VIKING—*Written and produced by Torick Frissell, with a cast including Capt. Bob Bartlett and Arthur Vinton. J. D. Williams, 8 reels.* A story of the life of seal hunters off Newfoundland. The fight of the ship through the ice, and the seal-hunting parts, are very good, but the attempt to adorn the picture with a love story was unfortunate in both intention and execution. A prologue spoken by Sir Wilfred Grenfell adds to the picture's interest and gives it importance as an authentic document. *Family audience. Junior motinee.*

WHITE SHOULDERS—*From a novel by Rex Beach, directed by Melville Brown, with a cast including Jack Holt, Mory Astor and Ricardo Cortez. RKO Radio Pictures, 9 reels.* A girl is swept off her feet into a marriage with a rich man whom she does not love, but after leaving him for a scoundrel she finds how worthy of love her husband really is. There is some novelty in the way the plot is worked out, and the acting is good. *Mature audience.*

YOUNG DONOVAN'S KID—*From a novel by Rex Beach, directed by Fred Niblo, with a cast including Richard Dix, Jackie Cooper and Marion Schilling. RKO Radio Pictures, 9 reels.* The story of a crook who reforms in order to set a good example for a small boy. Not so well directed as the silent version made years ago under the title of *Big Brother*, but the extraordinary acting of Jackie Cooper as the boy makes it well worth seeing. In spite of a gangster setting it is not strictly a gangster picture. *Family audience.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

The Beggar's Opera—11 rls.

(See page 11)

Mature audience.

Cain and Artem—7 rls.

(See page 14)

Mature audience.

Le Million—8 rls.

(See page 13)

Family audience.

THE honor for popularity—hearsay to the contrary, with audiences of the country goes to the action picture, according to a survey of box office receipts just made by the Motion Picture Herald, important trade publication, in 30 cities for the months of January, February, March and April. Melodrama ranks second, with the sex picture dropping into third position. Underworld and comedy entertainment follow in that order. Action pictures drew a gross 20 per cent above the average for that period, while sex films dropped 2 per cent below average.

SHORT SUBJECTS

ACES UP (Cartoon)—*RKO Radio*, 1 reel. Toby the Pup tries aviation. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

AND THE GREEN GRASS GREW ALL AROUND (Cartoon)—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Comedy song number. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE BANDMASTER (Oswald Cartoon)—*Universal*, 1 reel. The Lucky Rabbit leads a three men band and proves he can make music with most any old thing. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, No. 10—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Ripley cartoons strange events and peoples in many lands. *Family audience.*

THE BULL THROWER (Cartoon)—*RKO Radio*, 1 reel. Toby the Pup as a bull fighter. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

COUNTRY SCHOOL (Oswald Cartoon)—*Universal*, 1 reel. The Lucky Rabbit goes to school with little Mary Lamb and the other animals. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

FATHER NILE (Rambling Reporter Series)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. An instructive and interesting picture of the Valley of the Nile. *Family audience.*

THE FLY GUY (Aesop Fable)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. A fly takes his girl to a dance where he has trouble with Mr. Spider. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

FRESHMAN LOVE—*Vitaphone*, 2 reels. A youth falls in love with Ruth Etting's voice over the radio. *Family audience.*

HANDY GUY—*Vitaphone*, 2 reels. The famous jockey, Earle Sande, although seriously injured returns to the track and new glories. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

HOW I PLAY GOLF (Bobby Jones Series)—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel each. Bobby Jones describes the following—each one being a title of the series: *The Putter, Chip Shots, The Niblick, The Mashie Niblick, The Medium Irons.* *Family audience.*

JERUSALEM (Rambling Reporter Series)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. We see the contrast between the ancient city of biblical times within the walls and the modern city outside. *Family audience.*

A LESSON IN GOLF—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. An interesting and instructive picture showing in detail how to make various golf shots, demonstrated by Leo Diegel assisted by Cliff Edwards. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE MOOSE HUNT (Mickey Mouse Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Mickey Mouse goes moose hunting and has an exciting time—so does his dog. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MY WIFE'S GONE TO THE COUNTRY (Cartoon)—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Comedy song number. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PLAY BALL (Aesop Fable)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. The monkeys play the "all animal" baseball team. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS, No. 7—*Columbia*, 1 reel. The latest news of Hollywood. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SPLASH—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. A beautiful and instructive picture of swimming and diving, with some superfluous wisecracks. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

*STOUT HEARTS AND WILLING HANDS—*Laura LaPlante, Lew Cody, Mary Carr, Alec Francis, Frank Fay—RKO-Pathé*, 2 reels. A delicious satire on the old melodrama of the mortgage, the villain who wants to marry "Nell" and the hero, true-blue "Harold," who saves the farm and Nell. The old Keystone cops are on hand and come to the rescue. *Family audience.*

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS, Nos. 9 and 10—*Universal*, 1 reel each. Strange people and facts collected from all over the world. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

STREETS OF CAIRO (Rambling Reporter Series)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. The Rambling Reporter comments on various scenes photographed in the Egyptian city. *Family audience.*

2000 B. C. (Terry-Toons)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Stone age animals, a cave man and his woman in an amusing cartoon. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

YE OLDE TIME NEWSREEL—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. News of many years ago, events and fashions. *Family audience.*

WATER BUGS (Spotlight Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Johnny Weissmuller shows his swimming class some fancy dives. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. VI, No. 7



September, 1931



Sally Eilers and James Dunn in one of the earlier scenes in "Bad Girl" (see page 8)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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Young Reactions to Gangster Films

DURING the last year the National Board of Review has added a number of young people of high school age to its Review Committees, with the object of including a youthful point of view in its work of selecting pictures for different types of audience. These young people are representatives of such schools as the Scudder School, the Horace Mann School for Boys, Xavier College, the Fieldson School, the Dickinson High School (Jersey City, N. J.) and the Rutherford (N. J.) High School. These junior groups serve with the regular Review Committees, and their opinions, in both discussion and selection, have been particularly valuable in making the work of the Board more representative of general picture audiences.

Early in the summer, when the conflict of opinion about gangster films was reaching its height, the Board decided it would be interesting to show some of the films most under fire of discussion to a composite body of its junior groups, and try to tabulate their reactions and opinions as an audience that came nearest, among the members of the Board's reviewers, to the audiences of young people and children for whom such films were asserted to be most harmful.

Considering the age and mental calibre of these juniors it was not expected that they would react to these pictures much differently from adults. They did not represent the feeble-minded and emotionally irrespon-

sible class who are most likely to respond to suggestions from the screen.

The results bore out this expectation. Three films were seen—*Little Caesar*, *City Streets* and *Quick Millions*—and questionnaires, made with the help of the psychologist, Dr. Arthur Frank Payne, were filled out at each showing.

Granting that each one answered with entire frankness, it appears that the reactions of this group were entirely intelligent and normal. None admitted that he or she had been harmed in any way by any of the films. Answering a question regarding the possible effect of these films upon the members of their families most of them agreed that they would not want their eight year old brother or sister to see them. A few would allow the films to be shown to their fourteen year old brother or sister. A large percentage thought it would be safe for an eighteen year old brother or sister to see them—an equal number thought it would be equally safe for their mothers. Adult brothers and sisters, and fathers, were unanimously immune.

The questions varied somewhat according to the story of the picture under observation. The views on the characters and actions in the different films were extremely consistent, however, and it seems that very little new criminal knowledge was discovered. In the case of *Little Caesar* no one found any crime words that were not al-

ready familiar—in that of *City Streets* 5 per cent found crime words they had not known before. In *Quick Millions*, among nearly a dozen rackets figuring in some way in the picture, none of them were new to 35 per cent of the audience. Others found some with which they were not already acquainted.

There was an equal division of opinion about the value of the film in putting down racketeering. Some thought *Quick Millions*—the film that dealt most with racketeering rather than with gunmen—might help in the development of racketeering—more thought it would not.

Here are some of the general questions and an analysis of the answers to them.

"Is the gangster, as the central figure of a film drama, interesting to you? How interesting as compared with other types of hero?" To the first part of the question 70% considered him interesting while 30% did not. To the second part of the question, the 70% who thought gangsters interesting were divided 50-50 in the comparison with other types of heroes.

"Are the gangster activities interesting to you as dramatic material? Why or why not?" 80% yes, 20% no. Some of the answers stated by the interested ones were "The activities are interesting because intending to go into social work, I am inspired with a desire to help these men." "They are interesting because they are highly thrilling and make interesting material to watch but not to take part in." "I like to know and see life led by people different from me." "People often want to know what goes on in the underworld and this satisfies our curiosity somewhat." From among the 20% uninterested ones: "They are all the same." "Too morbid and cruel." "This type of picture might prove glamorous to some youngster."

"Does the gangster seem more real to you on the screen than other types of bad man?" 40% answered in the affirmative, 40% in the negative, and 20% could not

say as they had never encountered such a person.

"Does the fact that the gangster usually comes to a bad end in the films seem an impressive moral lesson to you? Would it be a deterrent to anyone who found gangster life glamorous and exciting enough to want to imitate it?" To the first part of the question the audience was divided. 45% thought the moral lesson impressive, 35% did not, and the remaining 20% were rather vague. As to the second part of the question, 55% thought yes, 15% thought no, and the others might be summed up in a quotation from one questionnaire: "I don't think that anyone who thought the life worth trying would be deterred, because everyone has the hope that they are clever enough to get away with it."

"Do you think there is any particular significance in children's liking to play games about gangsters and racketeers? Any more than their liking to play Indian?" Negative, 80%, affirmative 20%. The affirmative qualified their answers almost unanimously by the fact that children do not hear so much of Indians now and the gangster just happens to be the type of "bad man" they hear most about.

A WORD in favor of the National Board's plan of selection—of emphasis on the best in pictures and a disregard of the other—has been made by Mr. Edwin Schallert, drama and motion picture editor of the Los Angeles Times, who in talking of "What does the Public Want?" has said "that the public still likes motion pictures which combine 'laughter and tears.'" The people will accept any kind of an intelligent, well told story. Chiefly they want something to relieve the tension and bitterness in their own lives. However, wholesale condemnation of a motion picture only serves to increase its audience. You have to be cautious in dealing with pictures not approved on moral grounds.

Transition to the Talkies

By JACKSON E. TOWNE,
Librarian, Peabody College, Nashville, Tenn.

Mr. Towne has with his library work combined a keen interest in the stage and the screen. While living in Boston and New York City this interest was centered on the former but having more recently been in the middle west and at present in Tennessee, he has concentrated his interest on the motion picture and this story records the impressions, not of a critic or a reviewer, but an enthusiastic motion picture patron.

—EDITOR'S NOTE.

HERE is one moving picture fan who rejoiced at the advent of the talkies from the moment he heard the Vitaphone as a prelude to Barrymore's *Don Juan*. There were some bungling attempts beginning with *The Lion and the Mouse*, but it was not long before the "all talkie" was achieved, in that excellent story of the New York barber shop where the detective was momentarily fooled while a corpse was given a shave. Jolson's *Jazz Singer*, an infinitely poorer production than the second talkie in which he appeared, served to illustrate the financial possibilities of the talkies, and after that there were only a few faint protests.

"I think the legitimate stage had better look to its laurels," quoth Mr. Kaufman's platitudinous George in the dramatic satire, "Once In a Lifetime." For myself, I have enjoyed watching Hollywood look to its laurels and surely the film successes of such legitimate actors and actresses as Basil Rathbone, Walter Huston, Chester Morris, Edward G. Robinson, Ruth Chatterton and Ina Claire, merely to name a half dozen at random, have helped compensate many intelligent movie-goers for hours of inescapable boredom in the old Hollywood "clothes-horse" days.

Without recourse to any set of files, I have striven to recall the fifteen silent pic-

tures which have impressed me most, from the time when, as a boy, I used to pay a nickel to see Mary Pickford: *The Big Parade*, *The Birth of a Nation*, *Broken Blossoms*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Drums of Love*, *The Four Horsemen*, *He Who Gets Slapped*, *The Last Command*, *The Last Laugh*, *The Merry Widow*, *Our Dancing Daughters*, *Potemkin*, *Salome*, *The Sea Hawk* and *The Student Prince*. I hasten to point out that I have not selected any of the above pictures because they necessarily rose to Sophoclean dramatic heights.

It is interesting to note that eight of these pictures had military backgrounds and were panoramic in scope, providing a type of dramatic entertainment, in other words, not obtainable in an ordinary theatre. Of the silent war pictures, *The Big Parade* was by far the best and was most effective, be it noted, when produced as in the larger American cities, with sound accompaniments behind the screen.

Included in our list of fifteen "silents," are at least two pictures that were taken in studio space no greater than that of the average theatre stage, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and Nazimova's *Salome*. No less than three D. W. Griffith pictures have been included, although this director has turned out many poor films as well as an occasional masterpiece.

He Who Gets Slapped was an admirable treatment for the average moving picture audience of a play with a text far too obscure to warrant general popularity and quite unlikely to achieve reproduction even now that the talkies are with us to stay.

During the flood of stupid post-war films dealing with "flaming youth," there was produced a picture which treated the subject realistically, dramatically, philosophically, and entertainingly, *Our Dancing Daughters*.

That mad director, Erich von Stroheim, gave us a remarkable photographed version of *The Merry Widow*.

There was no more dramatic picture among the fifteen I have listed than *The Last Command*. Its director, Josef von Sternberg has recently produced two excellent talkies, one in Hollywood and one in Germany, namely, *Morocco* and *The Blue Angel*.

The picture which brought the greatest of silent movie actors into prominence, *The Last Laugh*, starring Emil Jannings, was notable for its use of odd camera angles. A freer and occasionally fanciful use of sound effects might now parallel in the talkies the odd camera angles first employed in silent pictures by the German directors. A recent Charlie Chase comedy curiously enough, definitely points the way for more serious efforts in this direction.

Among my fifteen favorite silent pictures I rank *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*, directed by Ernst Lubitsch, very near the top. *The Love Parade*, with Chevalier and Jeanette MacDonald, is striking evidence of what a fine talkie version of *The Student Prince* Lubitsch might now turn out. And he could keep his original leading man, for Ramon Novarro has proven a successful singing hero in a number of talkies.

While enthusiastic over Lubitsch's *The Love Parade*, this fan was keenly disappointed in its successor *Monte Carlo*. The effectiveness of *The Love Parade* lay in the fact that while an operetta in form, nevertheless its song cues and other musical paraphernalia were all introduced with comparatively convincing realism. This was true even of the chorus of barking dogs. But in *Monte Carlo* the director surrendered to the unrealities of an operetta libretto, and then, in superficial quest of mere technical novelties in sound reproduction, introduced songs completely lacking in dramatic effectiveness. This simply must be admitted of the train song, with locomotive and field-peasant accompaniment; and also of the telephone song.

A similarly unfortunate attempt at a novel song rendition is employed in a more recently produced talkie operetta *One Heavenly Night*, in which the principals are made to sing a duet in a pouring rain.

Broadway has never suffered any serious dearth of first-rate comedians, but before the talkies these entertainers were in many instances jealously excluded from Hollywood. Richard Carle, for years a Broadway star in his own right, has appeared in minor roles in many silent pictures and now finds himself back on Broadway again. Perhaps he will yet be able to return to Hollywood as a star. Joseph Cawthorn has often appeared in pictures in roles so insignificant that no one would realize he was a former Broadway comedian of the first rank. He is now given better opportunities. Older comedians like De Wolf Hopper and George M. Cohan were told they did not photograph well. Eddie Cantor fared better, and with the talkies come to stay, he will always be welcome in Hollywood. The Marx brothers have demonstrated that a picture of theirs will fill a movie theatre any time. Leon Errol, at first not permitted extended moments before the camera, now collapses in front of it and breaks statuary in close-ups to his heart's content. The most sophisticated of younger Broadway "comics," Frank Fay, has not yet been fairly given an opportunity in the talkies, but the new medium is almost certain to afford him his chance before long.

It is difficult to say whether the talkies have excelled in plays of prisons or of gangsters. Surely in *The Big House*, *Up the River* and *The Criminal Code*, there have been some striking treatments of life in American prisons. Mention here should be made of George Bancroft's most effective role in *Thunderbolt*, which dealt with the death-house theme as effectively as did the stage play, "The Last Mile" which the Bancroft film preceded.

Gangster talkies have been almost as numerous as the back-stage talkies that followed *Broadway Melody*. The best film

dramas of racketeering have included some admirably effective characterizations.

Ever since the success of the stage play "The Front Page," a vulgar yet racy and dramatically striking vernacular has become one of the most interesting vogues so far developed in the American theatre, and the talkies have surely contributed some worthy productions in this vein.

Recently I was interested in witnessing a talkie *She Got What She Wanted* in which an old time silent star, Betty Compson, held her own fairly well while Lee Tracy, a few seasons back the hero of the New York stage production "Broadway" gave great delight to a Nashville audience in what was probably one of the richest renditions of contemporary "Broadwayese" ever recorded.

One of the best of the recent war pictures was Buster Keaton's comedy *Doughboys*. Why? Because the perpetual bawling of Edward Brophy in the role of the hard-boiled top sergeant was a veritable vocal epitome of army life as the A. E. F. knew it.

By common critical consent, I believe one of the most gripping scenes ever photographed for a motion picture was the initial glimpse of the great Zeppelin in *Hell's Angels*. Nothing contributed more to the reality of this scene than the perfectly convincing rumble of the motors of the great ship.

All hail the transition to sound pictures and the talkies! We have noted that some of the best directors of the old silent pictures have survived to work splendidly in the new medium, their efforts strengthened by some first-rate recruits from the legitimate stage. And even though the results have as yet not been profoundly dramatic, a very promising technique is developing. Numerous notables trembled in Hollywood when the new trend appeared, but those of us who comprised "the great movie audience" were glad.

Films Have a Part in the Yorktown Sesquicentennial

THE celebration commemorating the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, to be held on October 16th-19th of this year at Yorktown, Virginia, is the last of the Sesquicentennial observances of outstanding events in the War of the Revolution. The Yorktown celebration is to be of national and international significance with the United States Government taking an active and important part.

A National Committee has been designated to promote motion picture programs depicting historical events associated with the Revolution. Civic and patriotic organizations in every community are invited and urged to co-operate in bringing about the presentation of films recommended by the Committee. The photodramas selected are taken from the series entitled "The Chronicles of America Photoplays," produced under the supervision and control of a committee of the Council of Yale University. They recreate, in a thoroughly accurate and inspiring manner, outstanding events in the history of our country. The specific pictures dealing with the Revolutionary period are: *The Eve of the Revolution*, marking the beginning of the struggle; *The Declaration of Independence*; *Vincennes*, depicting the acquisition of the Northwest territory under George Rogers Clark; *Daniel Boone*; *Yorktown*, marking the close of the War; and *Alexander Hamilton*, which traces the beginning of the Republic.

The Committee recommends especially the showing of *Vincennes* and *Yorktown* in observance of the Yorktown celebration. Each photoplay is three reels in length, consuming forty-five minutes. The two pictures with an appropriate address by a local speaker will furnish an afternoon or evening entertainment of possibly two hours.

(Continued on page 23)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional* and *Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Bad Girl

From the novel and play by Vina Delmar, with dialogue by Edwin Burke. Directed by Frank Borzage, the cast including Sally Eilers, James Dunn and Minna Gombell. Photographed by Chester Lyons. Released and distributed by Fox.

E VOLVING from book to stage to screen, *Bad Girl* has dropped many a detail that might have struck some people as sordid and increased enormously in the values of sheer entertainment. Incidentally, whatever badness there may have been to arouse curiosity in the girl originally, has receded so far into the background that only a prurient eye can claim to detect it. The realistic story of apartment-house life in the Bronx of New York City has become a Bronx idyl, charming, humorous, tender and amazingly life-like.

The striking thing about the picture is the simplicity of its story and the sincerity of its acting, which disarm the kind of criticism that looks for the unusual in films that are called exceptional. The everyday usualness is the unusual and exceptional quality of *Bad Girl*.

It is about nothing more than two city-bred youngsters who get acquainted on a Coney Island boat, and drift into a boy-and-girl affair that results in marriage and love. Then there are the domestic problems of a young couple without much money, and the special problem of a baby on its way which each thinks the other does not want. The struggles of the boyish husband to give the girl the care she needs make some of the most touching as well as amusing parts of the picture. After the baby has arrived the misunderstandings disappear.

Behind the slang and wise-cracking that come so naturally and effectively from the lips of the actors hides a fine sturdiness of character, and the humanness that goes through all their doings as the two young people grope their way into adjustment with each other and life is so warm and true that it entirely escapes the saccharinity that too often makes such a story as this unpalatable. A wise directorial hand has kept the tenderness from becoming maudlin, and held some ticklish situations in an admirable restraint that heightens their poignancy by dodging every suggestion of mawkishness.

Many people contribute excellent things—Edwin Burke has

BULLETIN

THIS MONTH Honorable Mention

Bad Girl
Street Scene

PREVIOUS MONTHS 1931

Exceptional
The Beggar's Opera
Cimarron
City Lights
Comrades of 1918
Le Million
Rango

Sous les Toits de Paris
Tabu
Trader Horn

Honorable Mention

The Blue Angel
Cain and Artem
City Streets
A Connecticut Yankee
Dishonored
East Lynne
Father's Son
The Front Page
The Public Enemy
Quick Millions
Skippy
Ten Cents a Dance

added vivid and natural and amusing dialogue to the story, and Frank Borzage has directed it with particular sympathy and skill. Sally Eilers and James Dunn—the latter quite new to films, the former justifying belief in a talent which she has had no such chance to show before—are as good as one can imagine possible as the two babes in the Bronx, and Minna Gombell makes her first screen reputation as a hard-boiled but big-hearted friend in a fashion that might be a useful model for the actresses who are continually being handed similar parts to play.—J. S. H.

Street Scene

Adapted by Elmer Rice from his Pulitzer Prize play of the same name. Directed by King Vidor. With a cast including Sylvia

Sidney, William Collier Jr., Estelle Taylor, David Landau, Beulah Bondi and Anna Kostant. Photographed by George Barnes and Gregg Toland. Produced by United Artists.

THE picturization of "Street Scene," Elmer Rice's Pulitzer Prize play, brings up again, this time with some new angles, the familiar questions of stage and screen: the tendency of the films to rely upon the play producers for their material whenever possible, even when that material is not suited to the films, the difficulty of translating a creation in one medium into another, the relative merits of stage and screen as artistic forces and so on. Photographed stage plays are no novelty to movie audiences any more. Scores of them have been adapted, with more or less success, to the films. "Street Scene," however, is



A glimpse of the tenement in "Street Scene."

probably the first one to present considerable difficulty and to bring out a rarely-met cleavage between stage and screen.

To illustrate this cleavage, consider the title: what was a simple and appropriate name for the stage play is a misnomer for the motion picture. Whatever else King Vidor's skillful product may be, it is not a street scene. Accustomed to presenting, with little or no difficulty, the drawing-room comedies and melodramas of the stage, the films have found a problem of a different sort in this segment of city life, which depends for its effect upon your constant recognition of the fact that here is but one section of a whole, one part of a street, into which other and irrelevant characters are continually wandering. While the turgid drama of Mr. Rice is mounting toward its dramatic climax in front of you, Life, as the writers put it, is going on in other forms to right and left of you. Battle, murder and sudden death may, for all you know, be lurking quiescent behind those other brown-stone fronts.

This is something the camera fails to catch. Often victor in its hand to hand conflicts with the stage, the motion picture is here torn between close-ups and long shots, and the overwhelming preponderance of the former converts what was once a panoramic bit of realism into the equivalent of a drawing-room triangle. When the camera starts to focus upon one or two or three characters, the plot thickens and "Street Scene" flies out of the window; petty domestic tragedy supplants the original "slice of life" conception.

And yet this is no poor production; it is, on the contrary, an exceedingly skillful and affecting one. Faced with the task of making a movie out of a famous play, familiar to playgoers of almost every country, King Vidor felt that it was not a time to take liberties with his material. This fidelity to the original resulted, paradoxically enough, in the film losing the thing it needed most, that impression of universality which was the playwright's chief aim. What is left is

the moving story of a wife, starved for "someone to talk to" and an occasional kind word, and her affair with a milk collector, resulting in discovery and death for both of them when her husband returns unexpectedly.

Around this center are clustered other elements: a young Jewish lad whose social-mindedness brings him little comfort; the woman's daughter, sympathetic, worried, and, on top of that, responsive to the boy; a gossip hag, a marvel of her species; people who are happy because they have babies and people who are unhappy because they have not. All of them, though, become ornaments and embroideries, rather than variations, on the theme. The movie makes them "atmosphere" instead of drama.

When King Vidor takes his camera away from its rounds of fidelity and shows you the dawn of a hot day in the tenement district, when he shows you man and beast and the elements rising for another round, when he discourses pictorially on crowds and their behavior, when he takes his camera up and away and shows you the street and the tenement from above, when he plays his little rhapsody over the roofs of New York—then you get an idea of what a *Street Scene* the movies could have provided if they had been strictly on their own. But when he comes down again to focus on the faces of his characters and lets them fill the screen, to the exclusion of all that teeming life which, the playgoers knew, was going on to right and left, then the conception must needs seem a petty one.

Within its limits *Street Scene* is a vivid and compelling show, beyond comparison with the general run of the movie mill, and though it fails to exploit its possibilities as did the stage production, yet is it a film packed with interesting detail. For a sound picture, however, it makes unusually little use of sound. The elevated, a few doors away, might just as well be non-existent and the tenement stoop might as well be a quiet drawing room, secure from all street noises.

No small assistance was that tendered by the cast, many of whom were in the original production. Of those, David Landau, as the father, and Beulah Bondi, as the tenement gossip, overemphasized by Mr. Vidor, gave the best portrayals, both of them superb. Of the screen trio who took leading roles, Sylvia Sidney was most excellent, imparting, as always, more sympathy and earnestness and credibility than any other screen player can project. William Collier Jr., was good as the sensitive Jewish boy and Estelle Taylor mixed the good and the poor as Mrs. Maurrant. With the rest of the cast it would be difficult to find any fault. The camera, for once, is the only culprit, and then only because, in the movies, the conception of "Street Scene" does not lend itself to too faithful a tracing.

—J. A. T.

Some Unusual Films Seen During the Summer

THE SMILING LIEUTENANT—A gay example of the kind of comedy that is known as Continental, the kind at which Ernst Lubitsch's directorial hand is so expert. It's naughtinesses are sly, witty and never blatant. It contains some of the old "Waltz Dream" music, and a few songs introduced with more novelty than is usual outside the German musical films. Maurice Chevalier has his customary smile and charm, and Miriam Hopkins manages to steal the hero so delightfully that there is no disappointment in the outcome.—*Paramount*.

TRANSATLANTIC—A melodrama of crooks on a big liner, which has no particular virtues as a story, becomes a corking motion picture through the unusual cinematic gifts of its director, William K. Howard. With his camera he brings excitement and thrills to some rather ordinary happenings, and he has an excellent group of actors to help him—among the

best of them Greta Nissen, Edmund Lowe and Earle Foxe.—*Fox*.

DIE LUSTIGEN WEIBER VON WIEN (The Merry Wives of Vienna)—Made by the same trio that fashioned *Zwei Herzen im Drei-Viertel Takt*, this new operetta has a charm and beauty even surpassing that of the *Hearts in Waltz-time* film. Its tale of the ten beautiful sisters and their maneuvers to save themselves from a new step-mother is really merry, and the settings and atmosphere of old Vienna is delightful.—*Capital*.

JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK—This picture is made with little attempt at cinematic change from one of the best plays of the modern Irish literary movement, and has the advantage of being acted by some of the foremost people in the famous Abbey Theatre of Dublin. It is a grimly realistic story, lightened only by the humor that comes from human nature faithfully represented, but its unusual qualities in character portrayal make it well worth seeing by anyone interested in the Irish drama—or any drama, for that matter.—*British International*.

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL—A charming picturing of Sheridan's classic, with more vitality to it than one usually finds in a costume play of its kind. An old-time atmosphere is delightfully reproduced, helped enormously by music of the period.—*British International*.

SHIRAZ—A curiosity—and an interesting one—among films. It was made in India by a cast of natives, and tells a native story without any Occidental trimmings, of the love of a potter's son for his father's adopted daughter, who later becomes the Empress in whose memory the Taj Mahal was erected. Delightful as an example of unadulterated folk-lore.—*British International*.

THE DREYFUS CASE—A conspicuous example of a rare type of film—that which
(Continued on page 23)

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

Community Interest in Visual Education

As there is particular interest in school activity at this season with the re-opening of classes we are presenting here a review of the session of our Seventh Annual Conference devoted to visual education.

—EDITOR'S NOTE.

ONE object of a Community Better Films Committee is to obtain support, through the education of public opinion, for the use of the motion picture as a teaching tool in visual education in the schools. The idea being to reinforce by the Committee's interest the progressive people in the schools who wish to use the motion picture in their work. This was the thought with which Mr. Barrett, Executive Secretary of the National Board of Review, opened the visual education session of the last annual conference.

He then introduced as presiding officer of the session, Mr. A. G. Balcom, a member of the Better Films National Council of the Board, one who has long been interested in furthering visual education as Supervisor of Visual Instruction in the schools of Newark, New Jersey.

Mr. Balcom opened his talk with this challenging statement: "I do not know what your religion is, whether it is a plan for personal salvation where you will inherit eternal life sometime, or whether it is one to make the world a better place in which to live. That, to my mind, is a very important part of religion. I think we are here today to do our part in making the world a better place in which to live.

"I passed by a church in Newark recently and it had outside a slogan, the spirit of which, I hope, will operate during the meeting today. The slogan, as I recall it, is this: 'It is bad manners to run down people

whether you are motorists or gossipers.' We are not here to run down anyone. We are here to try to understand each other better and to try to appreciate what each one of us is endeavoring to do in his or her own way.

"I represent the educational field and I know many of you are interested in that. You are interested also in things outside of education. You are interested in better films. I think we all agree that we would like to have better films than we sometimes see. Therefore we lend our influence to that end.

"Through my interest in education I am interested in the welfare of many boys and girls. I am interested in their requirement of academic subjects. But I am more interested in their character development. After all, that is the important thing in education and anything that affects the development of a child's character along the right lines is the thing that interests me. So, in the use of motion picture films, I make a bow to any film that is shown in any theatre that rouses the interest of a child or adult and stimulates his endeavor along worthwhile lines. On the other hand anything that makes my task more difficult, anything that prevents me from teaching the child honesty, and respect for elders, anything that prevents the child from getting a wholesome view of life is something that I am also interested in for I think we should proceed to eradicate that. Character development is a very important thing.

"This afternoon I want to stress work. We are passing through an emergency where so many people are out of employment. Some of them, I believe, are out of employment through no fault of their own.

I want to go on record as saying that the unemployment situation is not altogether due to the times in which we are living and I would like to stimulate the initiative of the young people. That is my problem as an educator. I believe the happiest people in the world are those who are the busiest. We want to bring to the attention of this generation and the generations to follow that wholesome view of work, of finding something to do by developing the creative ability of pupils. I think if we stimulate that power of initiative and develop the creative ability in the minds of pupils, we will have less unemployment.

"I am interested in the development of visual education. I know more about visual education than I do of motion picture films for entertainment. There has been a great development of visual education throughout the United States in the last ten years. We use many pictures now in the schools. We have slides as well as the projected pictures. The projected picture is the one that has light back of it. The projected picture has an attractiveness to the child mind because it has the reproduced rays of the sun back of it in the Mazda bulb. This bulb is a marvelous thing. It has taken years of painstaking work in the laboratory to produce it. Having that projected picture and flashing a spot of light on the screen immediately attracts the attention of the child. All types of pictures, whether they be slide or motion picture or still form has certain inherent attractiveness over any other reproduction, such as the flat picture or the photograph, all of which have their places in the scheme of education."

Mr. Balcom then introduced the speaker of the session, Dr. Lawrence Winchell, saying, "He is, first of all, an educator. About seven or eight years ago he became interested in visual education. He has done remarkably fine work in schools in New Jersey and he has become an instructor of teachers in Rutgers University. He has tried to impart that technique involved in the use of visual aids. He is an enthusiast on this

question and will tell you of what is being done in the schools in the matter of visual education."

Dr. Winchell's address follows: "The motion picture, no doubt, has probably the foremost place in the classification of visual education. It is one visual aid, but it is no doubt the most important one, especially if used by a well trained teacher. Many educators, masses of teachers, wonder how they may use it effectively. That is about the bewildered state of mind these teachers are in. There are a few educators who have vision and understanding and see the possibilities in the use of the film as a teaching tool in the classroom. Such is our chairman, Mr. Balcom, one of those outstanding educators who has served for years on national committees for the advancement of visual instruction, for two years as president of the National Academy of Visual Instruction and for almost fifteen years has built up and directed a most efficient visual instruction department.

"When we think of visual education, we should think of life. It is often said the school is life. We want to think that. In other words, the things that are going on in life should go on in schools. The radio should have a part in the schools. The motion picture should surely play its part in the schools. Let us think of life as represented by a triangle. On one side is heredity and on the other side is environment. Heredity is what we are and environment is what we have. The basis of that triangle is what we do—education. We cannot do very much about heredity or environment, but we can do a great deal about education.

"We must think clearly of the definition of education. What is education in modern times? It has changed from years ago. Education is simply wholesome growth in knowledge, attitude, skill, habit and ideals. Visual education is education through the eye, the most important sense we have. Visual education is both real and vicarious. An example of real experience in visual education would be that of taking the children

of a class on a field trip and letting them see real objects. That is a conscious response to a real situation. The vicarious experience would be to have the children view a classroom motion picture. That is a conscious response to an unreal situation. We will all agree that probably the better of the two would be the real experience, but I can recall many cases in which the vicarious experience was the far superior thing. Let me illustrate that.

"When I was a boy in high school, I was called on to give a lecture on the Mephitis, commonly known as the skunk. After telling about the life, habits and benefits to mankind of this animal, realizing that seeing is believing—even at that age I considered that visual education was important—I drew from under the table a tame skunk, alive, and placed it on the table. I was not able to hold my audience. From past experiences, not visual or auditory, they realized that that was not the place to stay. So the next time I delivered a talk, I used the motion picture and I held my audience.

"We realize that the vicarious experience must be utilized. We cannot take the children to the ends of the earth, but we certainly can bring to the classroom the world by means of the motion picture. We must keep in mind the idea that some people confuse the use of the film as a book with a funnel-pouring process of presenting knowledge. There is much more to it.

"In using films, we have to prepare the child's mind. We have to work up to it. Then we present the picture. Once for the emotional appeal, two or three times to establish the facts, then to drill, to make vivid, to cut out any wrong ideas and then to fix the impression on the minds of the children. It is important that we do more than simply project the picture. We must realize the great value of the teacher in this respect. The motion picture will never eliminate that human element that is necessary in the development of childhood.

"We feel that with the invention of the talking picture we are coming nearer the

point, because education gained through the senses is important. We should not classify one sense, the visual, and say we are gaining education through that sense. In driving a car, one has to see it, feel it, hear it. In learning to play the piano, three senses are taking part. In my experience, the fact that other senses than the visual have taken part has made a lasting impression. Thus we look forward to those means that will bring in more and more of the other senses, but we realize that the visual sense is the most important. Therefore, we feel that we are justified to a certain extent in stressing this idea of visual education in our classroom procedure.

"These terms, 'visual education' and 'visual instruction,' are rather general and confusing. The term 'visual instruction' is more professional than the term 'visual education' but it is so ambiguous that some people think it is teaching children the care of the eyes. Some people think it is simply using the motion picture. We do a great many more things than use the motion pictures. We use slides and all these various things with which you are well acquainted. It is not confined to one type of visual aid.

"The greatest contribution, I believe, that motion pictures are making to education as a teaching tool is to offset the so-called verbalism. Verbalism is the curse of teaching. It is the use of a great many words without any meaning, without any knowledge on the part of the children and, very often, on the part of the teacher, briefly stated, endless words without any meaning.

"In a classroom in a city district, a teacher was attempting to describe to the children the sea lion and she was quite irritated because the children failed to respond. She did not even have one bright boy in the class that she could call upon. It so happened that she was particularly perturbed because the supervisor was present. Finally she gave up in despair and the supervisor said, 'Of you forty boys and girls, how many know what a sea lion is?' Six hands went up. He said to them, 'How many of you

think a sea lion is a fish?' They all agreed it was a fish. The next time the teacher taught the lesson, she had a motion picture showing the sea lion in its natural environment, thus rounding out the conception of the sea lion in a better way than any other, except, perhaps taking the children to its natural home, which was out of the question, of course.

"Another example is this: When a picture of the Holy Land was shown to a high school group, a girl later admitted to me that for the first time she realized that Palestine was on earth and not in Heaven.

"In using the motion picture as a teaching tool in the classroom, we do not feel that it is going to displace everything else. We use it in a common sense way. We feel wherever movement is concerned, and the development of movement by means of the film is used to clear up certain abstract ideas of the children, that it is quite important.

"The use of the animated diagram in motion picture, or the movable diagram, as it is sometimes called, is very important. Take, for example, the teaching of a class of science students about the internal workings of a Ford motor. They can see by means of the drawing the way the spark ignites the gas and forces the piston. That can not be revealed in any other way to those students.

"I remember using a picture entitled *Our Government* to teach civic lessons. The children had on the screen before them the map of the United States with the various states divided by lines and on each state were two dots representing the senators elected from that state. Later on, these dots moved slowly toward the seat of government at Washington. The children saw very clearly before them what was a tiresome bit of drill when we tried to teach it to them from the text books. In teaching civics, we have some very fine films showing world events to our children almost twenty-four hours after they have happened.

"There are other ways outside of the

schools in which films are used. We never lose an opportunity to influence our children to go to the fine motion pictures that are being shown in the theatres. We feel that especially with historical films, such as *The Covered Wagon* and *The Big Trail*, the children get a great deal out of them. We have used, and schools all over the country are using, the *Chronicles of America* historical films which were produced by Yale University at the cost of somewhere near \$3,000,000. There are forty-nine reels, fifteen subjects, which start with Columbus and continue through the Pilgrims, the Puritans, Jamestown, and so on, right to the end of the Civil War. These films arouse the emotional appeal that is so important in developing character in children.

"I can recall in the use of one of those films, *The Declaration of Independence*, noticing the expressions on the faces of the children as that picture showed our ancestors signing the Declaration. I believe in the use of films that have qualities, such as these famous historical films have, of developing the right attitude and becoming a pattern in the lives of children.

"Think of the work in geography. We have wealth in our pictures for teaching that. We can take the city children, thousands of them who know only about the block in which they live, to distant countries, so that they may appreciate how people in these countries gain a living, clothe themselves, etc. We can show them fields of wheat, great rivers flowing through the plains and taking the dirt and depositing it. Then we can take the country children by means of the motion picture and put them into the crowded thoroughfares, showing them the busy market places and the docks where the ships go back and forth to Europe. I might illustrate by telling of an experience.

"We had in a New Jersey town, a grammar school band organization. The children in the band were brought over to Madison Square Garden in New York City to play at a musicale before 12,000 people. One

little fellow, as he entered New York from the tube subway said, 'Mr. Winchell, I can't see the city, there are too many tall buildings.' He had never been out of the country. In fact, most of these children had never been away from the immediate vicinity in which they lived.

"By means of pictures we can give to children a wealth of experience that is so necessary in developing the sense that goes to build their imagination and creative zeal, qualities which are very important for life.

"The motion picture may be used to show the continuity of a process, the entire process. For instance, in teaching cotton, we can show by means of the film the cotton as it is planted, grown, shipped, and carried right on through to the finished piece of cotton goods, bringing the whole thing to the child. It is the only type of visual aid, I believe, that can do this.

"The idea of using slow motion is very important in the teaching film. An experiment was tried out by striking an electric light bulb with a hammer. Everyone would think that the bulb would burst at the point the hammer hit. It was revealed however, by slow motion that it burst on the opposite side.

"An interesting experience along this line occurred last September in a school. One of the children on taking a trip to the country, saw a very peculiar looking object, green with gold spots. He took it to his teacher and asked her if she would tell him about it. She realized that here was a very fine way of developing a nature study lesson. She told the children that the object was the chrysalis or cocoon of the Monarch butterfly and described to them how these metamorphoses took place. The eggs, after quite some time, hatched into a worm and then later on the worm spun a web, or a cocoon, and later on the cocoon burst forth into the beautiful American Monarch butterfly. The children formed into groups. One group went to the library and got books. Another collected pictures. Another went out into the fields to try to get

other specimens of this butterfly. The teacher had the children's interest, which is so important, and she was developing activity on their part. Finally, after they had prepared themselves for this very fine development lesson, she realized that that wonderful thing in nature, the change from the cocoon to the butterfly, could not after all be revealed to the children in the reality. It might take place at midnight, when the children were at home and asleep. She then went to the Department of Visual Education and secured the film, *The Monarch Butterfly*, and there before the eyes of the children, by means of slow motion, this change from the cocoon to the beautiful butterfly took place.

"The other phase of the motion picture interest which has been touched upon, the realization by educators of this great factor of the motion picture in the theatre, is something we must think of in addition to the use of the motion picture as a teaching tool. We all recognize it as a great force. It is something we should appreciate and should encourage teachers to appreciate and they in turn encourage children to study, evaluate and appreciate.

"We have an interest in the Community Plan which for many years has been supplying this very thing of bringing to the people of the community and the children of the schools the very best that the motion picture world is producing for entertainment. Along with that, we are trying to develop good citizenship, health and the right attitude toward life, to develop the behavior patterns and, one of the most important things, the social feeling that is shared by all. That can be developed by this great force that is working in every one of our committees, the motion picture and the theatre.

"We have to recognize it in the school and we are. We have reactions from our children after they have seen the pictures we have encouraged them to see. For instance, after viewing a comedy, a child said, 'I didn't think that was funny when that person fell

down and got hurt,' raising the element of humor to a higher standard. Children don't care for slapstick. They say, 'That picture was not historically correct,' 'That picture was not true to life,' or 'That was historically correct and true to life!' Those are the reactions that come from the children.

"We have standards which our teachers are encouraged to use and review pictures. Then in the classroom they tell the children about these pictures, fitting them in, so far as possible, with the curriculum. It is very important to have these pictures come at the right time. That is not so easy, very often, but we manage to do it in a great many cases.

"Excellent films for children are those which are well balanced, those which do not over-emphasize one certain thing. Films that bring out sincerity, that are not over-exaggerated. There are good films which are historically correct and true to life. The suitability of the film depends upon the age of the child. We try to govern that in encouraging the children to see the picture.

"We feel that the two forces working together in the schools and in the theatres are essential, bringing, as our Chairman has stated, not only the sunshine into the classroom but into the lives of boys and girls by means of the interest that you and I take in this great movement of visual education."

History in the Modern Manner

A few months ago we printed a story under the title "The Motion Picture Records a Coronation,"* of the attendance of one of our Review Committee members, Mrs. H. Murray Jacoby, at the coronation ceremonies of the new ruler of Abyssinia. Further word of the use of motion pictures in this country has come to us through a recent item in the New York Times and we reprint it here in part as a continuation of

* *The National Board of Review Magazine*, Vol. VI, No. 5, Page 5.

interest in the country which writes its history in the films.

"Africa was a fertile field for the imagination of Rider Haggard, but there are some places in Africa where the facts conquer the imagination. Picture, for instance, the scene at Addis Abeba, capital of Abyssinia, when the descendent of the romance of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, Emperor Haile Selassie I, granted a constitution to his subjects.

"After 3,000 years Ethiopia changed her form of government, and in full view of the celluloid film. Will Rogers once said, 'Give Ireland home rule, but give me the movie rights.' Now he may be willing to change the geography of his wish from Ireland to Abyssinia. Recent events in Abyssinia have screened well. There was the scene of barbarous splendor of a year ago when Hailie Selassie was crowned Emperor. A short time before was a simpler, even more significant picture: Haile Selassie, the embodiment of calm dignity, seated at a flat-top French desk; behind him in striking contrast, an Ethiopian noble in gorgeous robes and the American Chargé d'Affaires in starched linen and morning coat; and the caption was: 'Signing the Kellogg Anti-War Pact.'

"The slow progress of Western civilization from the Dark Ages to the present is chronicled on shelf after shelf of our great libraries. Can the transition of Abyssinia from the Middle Ages to the era of conquered electrons be recorded on a few feet of film?"

THE National Library of Austria has created a "Cinematheque," in which will be conserved copies of the most important films judged from an artistic and documentary point of view. Already 15,000 photographs and 500 film placards have been catalogued and stored. The principal object in view is to prevent the loss of such films after a short period of projection in the cinemas.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

EDITOR

JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIED INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. *Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).*

Mature audience. *Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).*

Junior matinee. *Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.*

**—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.*

AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY—*From the novel by Theodore Dreiser, directed by Josef von Sternberg, with a cast including Phillips Holmes, Sylvia Sydney, Irving Pichel, Frances Dee and Lucille La Verne. Paramount, 10 reels. A condensation of a lengthy novel that gives little room to develop either its interest or significance. It becomes a bare murder story of a weak boy who kills a girl and is convicted for it, with the chief emphasis on the trial. No sympathy and little understanding is created for the boy and the American atmosphere is unconvincing. The acting of Sylvia Sydney stands out forcibly, and the court room scene is interesting but the direction is generally a disappointment. Mature audience.*

THE ARIZONA TERROR—*Screen story by John Natteford, directed by Phil Rosen, starring Ken Maynard. Tiffany, 6 reels. Excellent riding and outdoor action in a melodrama of the West, in which a man suspected of a crime eventually proves his innocence. Tarzan, the white horse, plays a part as cleverly as any of the actors. Family audience.*

THE BIG GAMBLE—*From a story by Octavus Roy Cohen, directed by Fred Niblo, with a cast including Bill Boyd, Dorothy Sebastian, Warner Oland, Zasu Pitts and James Gleason. RKO-Pathé, 6 reels. Good melodrama, in which a young man makes an odd marriage bargain in order to put himself right with the world before he dies. The cast of well-known names acts excellently. Mature audience.*

BORDER LAW—*Screen story by Stuart Anthony, directed by Louis King, starring Buck Jones. Columbia, 6 reels. A well-produced*

and well-acted Western picture with fine riding and a story full of suspense. It concerns a U. S. trooper who poses as a desperado in order to capture a notorious criminal and his gang. Family audience. Junior matinee.

BUEHNENFIEBER (Stage Struck)—*From a story by Bernard Buchbinder, directed by Carl Lamac, with a cast including Anny Ondra, Vlasta Burian and Berthe Ostyne. Tobis-Forenfilms, 9 reels. A pleasant German musical comedy with gay action and the not unusual plot of a girl obtaining a prima donna role and making a hit. German dialogue. Family audience.*

DAUGHTER OF THE DRAGON—*From the novel "The Daughter of Fu Manchu" by Sax Rohmer, directed by Lloyd Corrigan, with a cast including Anna May Wong, Warner Oland and Sessue Hayakawa. Paramount, 8 reels. Well produced melodrama of its kind, which includes Oriental vengeance, secret passages, tortures and the final extermination of all the villains. Anna May Wong and Sessue Hayakawa reappear successfully on the American screen, and Warner Oland repeats his picturesque version of Chinese villainy. Mature audience.*

FIFTY FATHOMS DEEP—*Screen story by Dorothy Howell, directed by F. William Neill, with a cast including Jack Holt, Richard Cromwell and Loretta Sayers. Columbia, 7 reels. The story of two pals, deep-sea divers, and a girl who comes between them. A familiar plot but well-done, with dramatic episodes and excellent diving scenes. Richard Cromwell, the boy in *Tolable David*, co-stars effectively with Jack Holt. Mature audience.*

FLYING LARIATS—*Screen story and direction by David Kirkland, starring Wally Wales. Big Four, 6 reels. An exciting rodeo is the high note of interest in this Western which will prove entertaining for the children and for those fond of horses. Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE GAY DIPLOMAT—*Screen story by Ivan Lebedeff, directed by Richard Boleshafsky, with a cast including Ivan Lebedeff, Genevieve Tobin and Betty Compson. RKO-Radio, 8 reels. European intrigue for the American provinces.*

Three obviously Yankee ladies are mixed up in a spy chase in Bucharest, wearing 1931 clothes in a 1915 plot. The mask-faced, well-dressed Mr. Lebedeff is the flirtatious spy-chaser. Pictorially excellent. *Mature audience.*

GRAFT—*From a story by Barney Barring, directed by Christy Cabanne, with a cast including Regis Toomey and Sue Carol. Universal, 6 reels.* A cub reporter solves a murder, uncovers graft, helps win an election, and gets a scoop for his paper to keep his job. Amusing performance by Regis Toomey. *Mature audience.*

GUILTY HANDS—*Screen story by Bayard Veiller, directed by W. S. Van Dyke, with a cast including Lionel Barrymore, Kay Francis and Madge Evans. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels.* Interesting melodrama with certain implausible episodes, about a so-called justifiable murder and the startling retribution that overtakes the murderer. Excellent characterization by Lionel Barrymore and good direction. *Mature audience.*

HUCKLEBERRY FINN—*From the novel by Mark Twain, directed by Norman Taurog, with a cast including Junior Durkin, Jackie Coogan and Mitzie Green. Paramount, 8 reels.* Mark Twain rewritten for the movies with almost nothing of the original except some of the characters. Tom Sawyer rather tiresomely played up on account of Jackie Coogan. Amusing entertainment for those who do not mind such wholesale revision of a classic and who like cuteness. Junior Durkin is extremely good. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

I LIKE YOUR NERVE—*From a story by Roland Pertwee, directed by William McGann, with a cast including Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. and Loretta Young. First National, 8 reels.* The old story of the fresh young man who wins the girl by persistently making a nuisance of himself. Although the plot is trite, the dialogue is good and it makes pleasant entertainment. *Family audience.*

THE IMMORTAL VAGABOND—*From a story by Robert Liebmann and Karl Hartl, directed by Gustav Ucicky, starring Liane Haid and Gustav Frohlich. Talking Picture Epics, 7 reels.* A simple love story of the Tyrol and Vienna, nicely done with some good music and excellent local color. *Family audience.*

THE LAST COMPANY (Thirteen Men and a Girl)—*From a German play, directed by Kurt Bernhardt, starring Conrad Veidt. Talking Picture Epics, 5 reels.* Beautifully photographed, well acted but rather slow moving story of the Franco-Prussian War in which a small band of heroes holds up the enemy while their own army affects a retreat. Conrad Veidt is particularly good. *Family audience.*

MERELY MARY ANN—*From the play by Israel Zangwill, directed by Henry King, starring*

Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell. Fox, 7 reels. A simple Cinderella theme, with plenty of sentiment and humor of a rather obvious kind, and an excellent characterization by Beryl Mercer. *Family audience.*

MONKEY BUSINESS—*Screen story by S. J. Perelman and Will B. Johnstone, directed by Norman McLeod, starring the Marx Brothers. Paramount, 8 reels.* The Four Marx Brothers going through their usual antics. Their trip as stowaways on an ocean liner is highly amusing. Without the characteristic cutting up and punning of the four brothers the picture would have been a mediocre slap-stick comedy. *Family audience.*

THE PAGAN LADY—*From the play by William DuBois, directed by John Francis Dillon, with a cast including Evelyn Brent, Charles Bickford and Conrad Nagel. Columbia, 8 reels.* Entertaining drama with excellent acting by all three principals. The plot centers around a girl who has been tending a bar in Havana and a man, a rum-runner, who brings her to Florida where she meets a young reformer. *Mature audience.*

DIE PRIVATSEKRETARIN (The Private Secretary)—*Musical comedy by Franz Schulz, directed by Wilhelm Thiele, with a cast including Renate Muller and Herman Thimig. Capital, 8 reels.* A cheerful comedy with music, done with the gaiety and charm characteristic of the Germans when they make this kind of a picture. The plot is simple enough to follow without much knowledge of German. *Family audience.*

SECRETS OF A SECRETARY—*Screen story by Charles Brackett, directed by George Abbott, with a cast including Claudette Colbert, Herbert Marshall, Mary Boland and Betty Lawford. Paramount, 8 reels.* Refined melodrama made plausible by excellent direction and restrained acting. The title is much more sensational than the story. *Mature audience.*

SIDE SHOW—*Screen story by William K. Wells, directed by Roy del Ruth, with a cast including Winnie Lightner and Charles Butterworth. Warner, 6 reels.* A comedy with circus life as the background. A love theme involving the eternal triangle runs through it. The cast is good and Winnie Lightner has an opportunity to display her versatility as an impersonator. *Mature audience.*

SILENCE—*From the play by Max Marcin, directed by Louis Gasnier and Max Marcin, with a cast including Clive Brook, Peggy Shannon and Charles Starrett. Paramount, 8 reels.* Melodrama of a father's love for his daughter. A man about to die for a murder of which he is innocent, is trapped into a confession that he believes will be kept secret. The acting of the cast is very good. *Mature audience.*

THE SKY SPIDER—*From the story by Grace Keel Norton, directed by Richard Thorne, with a cast including Glenn Tryon and Beryl Mer-*

cer. *Action Pictures*, 6 reels. An adventure picture—a plot to rob the air mail, and three brothers who catch the robbers. Strong on filial devotion. *Family audience.*

SMART WOMAN—From the play "Nancy's Private Affair" by Myron B. Fagan, directed by Gregory La Cava, with a cast including Mary Astor, Robert Ames and John Halliday. *RKO-Radio*, 8 reels. Sophisticated comedy of a wife's way of winning back her husband. The plot is not momentous but the dialogue is bright and the acting and direction good. *Mature audience.*

THE SPIDER—From the play by Fulton Oursler and Lowell Brentano, directed by William C. Menzies and Kenneth McKenna, starring Edmund Lowe. *Fox*, 6 reels. An absorbing mystery drama interestingly unfolded. The direction and camera work is well done and the cast well chosen. *Mature audience.*

THE STAR WITNESS—Screen story by Lucien Hubbard, directed by William A. Wellman, with a cast including Walter Huston, Frances Starr and Chic Sales. *Warner*, 7 reels. The story of how an unsuspecting family are witnesses to a gang murder and are called upon to identify and testify against the murderer. An interesting picture and one that might be called anti-gangster propaganda. The cast is well chosen and Chic Sales as the Civil War veteran has some opportunities to make a few remarks in favor of "Americanism." *Family audience.*

SUNDOWN TRAIL—Screen story and direction by Robert F. Hill, with a cast including Tom Keene and Marion Shilling. *RKO-Pathé*, 5 reels. Western romance concerning a girl from the East who attempts to high-hat her father's cowboys. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THIS MODERN AGE—From the story "Girls Together" by Mildred Cram, directed by Nick Grinde, with a cast including Joan Crawford, Pauline Frederick and Neil Hamilton. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 8 reels. A sophisticated story of an American girl in Paris and her efforts to rescue her divorced mother from a déclassé existence. Pauline Frederick and Joan Crawford are particularly good as mother and daughter. *Mature audience.*

WATERLOO BRIDGE—From the play by Robert E. Sherwood, directed by James Whale, starring Mae Clark and Kent Douglass. *Universal*, 9 reels. An interesting picture of an American girl stranded in London when her show closes at the outbreak of the World War and the life she afterwards leads. The performance of Mae Clark is excellent. *Mature audience.*

THE WHITE DEVIL—From the story "Hadji Mural" by Leo Tolstoi, directed by Alexander Wolkoff, with a cast including Ivan Mosjoukine, Betty Amann and Lil Dagover. *Talking Picture Epics*, 7 reels. A slow but solid German picture with a Russian setting—the story

of the rivalry between a Cossack chieftain and Czar Nicholas I for a dancing girl. The acting is excellent and there are many stirring situations. *Mature audience.*

WOMEN GO ON FOREVER—From the play by Daniel N. Rubin, directed by Walter Lang, with a cast including Clara Kimball Young and Marion Nixon. *Tiffany*, 7 reels. Well written, well directed and well acted. It is a rough and disillusioning picture of what women endure from men and not likely to please sensitive audiences. Clara Kimball Young is excellent as a boarding-house keeper who is both hard-boiled and tender-hearted. *Mature audience.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

Bad Girl—9 rls.

(See page 8)

Mature audience.

Street Scene—7 rls.

(See page 9)

Mature audience.

SHORT SUBJECTS

BENARES—THE HINDU HEAVEN (Voice of the Globe Series)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. Travelogue with an interesting lecture but like so many of the pictures of India it dwells mostly upon the sordid. *Family audience.*

BENEATH THE SOUTHERN CROSS (Vagabond Adventures Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Educational shots of the Samoan Islands. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BIG GAME (Aesop Fable)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Cartoon of big game hunting. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BLUE RHYTHM (Mickey Mouse Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Mickey plays the piano and leads the orchestra and Minnie sings. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

CANADIAN CAPERS (Terrytoons)—*Educational*, 1 reel. The Canadian animals trip the light fantastic. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE CAT'S NIGHTMARE (Silly Symphony)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Clever and amusing cartoon of the weird sights and sounds a cat sees and hears in a nightmare. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE CHAMP (Terrytoons)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Cartoon of a prizefight and the subsequent exploits of the fighter. *Family audience.*

CHRIS-CROSSED—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Eddie Buzzell tells another bed-time story for the grown-ups—this time of brave Chris Colum-

bus, his voyage and the wild Indians he finds in America. Amusing for those who like the Buzzell sense of humor. *Mature audience.*

COLORFUL JAIPUR (Fitzpatrick Traveltalks)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. One of India's most picturesque cities. *Family audience.*

CURIOSITIES No. c-224—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Interesting oddities including trout fishing on a city street; turkeys on the hoof, etc. *Family audience.*

CURSES - CURSES—*Columbia*, 1 reel. An amusing picture acted by monkeys of the old time melodrama of true blue Harold and the mortgage the villain holds on the homestead. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. Fascinating shots of the great diamond industry. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

DOWN TO DAMASCUS (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. The ancient city as it is today. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

DREAMWORLD (Romantic Journeys Series)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Lovely views in color of various places in Southern California. *Family audience.*

FALSE ROOMERS—*RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. Clark and McCulloch at their usual antics this time in a boarding house. *Family audience.*

FOR YOU—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Popular song hit well rendered. *Family audience.*

FUN ON THE ICE (Aesop Fable)—*RKO-Pathe*, 1 reel. The animals have a glorious time indulging in winter sports. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

GIANTS OF THE JUNGLE (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. Interesting travelogue in which we view elephants. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE GLAND PARADE—*RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. Violent farce with Roscoe Ates as a stuttering window-washer. *Family audience.*

THE GREAT DECISION (Supreme Thrills Series)—*RKO-Pathe*, 1 reel. The first of Floyd Gibbons' series tells of Woodrow Wilson's decision to enter the World War and his fight for the treaty. The story is told in selections from contemporary newsreels with an accompaniment of Gibbons' high-pressure talk. Interesting historically. *Family audience.*

GYPSY CARAVAN—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Martinelli singing gypsy songs. *Family audience.*

HOW I PLAY GOLF (Bobby Jones Series)—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Bobby Jones plays a round of golf using all the clubs. The last of the series. *Family audience.*

INDIA TODAY (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. A cheerful and amusing picture of India. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

JAZZ MAD (Terrytoons)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Three musicians start a lot of trouble. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

JOURNEYS TO GREAT MASTERS—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Painting and sculpture. *Family audience.*

KENTUCKY BELLES (Oswald Cartoon)—*Universal*, 1 reel. A race between several unique looking horses and their riders. *Family audience.*

THE KING'S ARMADA (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. From the Magic Carpet we view the fleet of H. R. M. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

LAND OF ENCHANTMENT (Rambling Reporter Series)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. The lovely island of Japan with special attention to the pearl industry. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MADEIRA (Voice of the Globe Series)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. Unusually beautiful travelogue with a most interesting and educational lecture. The map shown at the beginning of each episode of this series is very wise as it places the scene to be visited in the audience's mind. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MANHATTAN MARINES (Sportlight Series)—*RKO-Pathe*, 1 reel. A cruise around Manhattan Island. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MINDING THE BABY (Talkartoon)—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Betty Boop and Bimbo mind the baby. *Family audience.*

OLD LACE—*Vitaphone*, 2 reels. Ruth Etting in songs with a slight plot from the '90's. *Family audience.*

OLYMPIC TALENT (Sportlight Series)—*RKO-Pathe*, 1 reel. Men and women athletes who are likely to compete in the next Olympic games. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

OVER THE VIKING TRAIL (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. Norway and Sweden with interesting glimpses of peasant customs. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 1—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Lowell Thomas describing Finland playfully; interesting color pictures of Japanese goldfish; etc. *Family audience.*

PATHE REVIEW NO. 2—*RKO-Pathe*, 1 reel. Tunny fishing in Sicily; a barnyard scandal; shots of early aeroplanes with Teddy Roosevelt going up in one, etc. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

POLAR PALS (Tom and Jerry Cartoon)—*RKO-Radio*, 1 reel. Two wanderers arrive at the pole and mingle with the Arctic animals. *Family audience.*

SAY A LITTLE PRAYER FOR ME—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Organ and vocal selection. *Family audience.*

SCRAPPY - THE LITTLE PEST (Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Amusing and rather novel cartoon of two boys, their dog and a fishing trip. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 10—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Better than the usual movie glimpses of the stars. *Family audience.*

SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 1—*Paramount*, 1 reel. A collection from early motion pictures and newsreels. Most interesting historically is the making of the Panama Canal and the appearance of Theodore Roosevelt at its opening. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SHIVER MY TIMBERS—*Hal Roach's Rascals, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 reels. The Rascals become imbued with the seafaring spirit after listening to some salty tales from an old sailor but they later become convinced the pirate life is not for them. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SPEAKING OUT OF TURN—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Comic results from throwing a talkie out of synchronization. *Family audience.*

SPORTSLANTS—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Ted Hus- ing and ping-pong, swimming, handball and lacrosse. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SPRING TRAINING (Football for the Fan Series)—*Tiffany*, 1 reel. Excellent football instructions by successful coaches. *Family audience.*

STORMY SEAS (Flip the Frog Cartoons)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. Flip endeavors to rescue his girl from a sinking ship. *Family audience.*

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 12—*Universal*, 1 reel. Many strange things such as a penguin who loses its mate and is made happy by his reflection in a mirror; a five-year old Hercules, etc., *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SVENGARLIC (Krazy Kat Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Clever cartoon in which Trilby succeeds in recovering from Svengali's hypnotic spell in time. *Family audience.*

THE TAMALE VENDOR—*Educational*, 2 reels. Tom Patricola's dancing makes a trite comedy interesting. *Family audience.*

TRAIL OF THE SWORDFISH (Cannibals of the Deep Series)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Mack Sennett deserts comedies and has an exciting time trying to catch a swordfish. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE TRAP (Detective Burns Series)—*Educational*, 1 reel. How a man who escaped from prison was captured just as he was on the verge of committing another crime. Much better than usual. *Family audience.*

TROPICAL CEYLON (Fitzpatrick Travel-talks)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. Life on the Island of Ceylon. *Family audience.*

THE VALE OF KASHMIR (Rambling Reporter Series)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. The beauties of Kashmir and the quaint customs of the natives. *Family audience.*

THE VANISHING LEGION—*Mascot*, 12 episodes of 2 reels each. A better-than-usual serial, dealing with a fight for an oil field and a mysterious person known as "The Voice" who makes all the trouble. A fine horse and its boy rider increase the juvenile interest in the story. *Family audience.*

VOLLEY AND SMASH (Sport Champions Series)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. Big Bill Tilden demonstrates some of his famous strokes. Very good. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

WANDERING THROUGH CHINA (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. We fly on the Magic Carpet to China. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

WEDGE PLAYS (Football for the Fan Series)—*Tiffany*, 1 reel. Excellent instruction in football. *Family audience.*

WHAT PRICE PANTS—*Paramount*, 2 reels. Smith and Dale in Jewish dialect farce, burlesquing gangster films by putting gangsters in control of the pants business. *Family audience.*

WHEN YOUR LOVER HAS GONE—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Singing and organ recital. *Family audience.*

WHERE EAST MEETS WEST (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. Travelogue of Singapore with better than usual pictures of life there. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

WHIPPET RACING (Sport Champions Series)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. Most entertaining short depicting the origin and training of whippets for racing. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

WILD AND WOOLLY (Sport Champions Series)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. Western rodeo with the usual broncho busting and calf throwing—interesting in itself but the accompanying talk is too full of strained wisecracks. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

WILD LIFE ON THE VELDT (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. The preservation of wild animals in Africa with an exciting finish. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE WILD WEST OF TODAY (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. Buffalo, cattle, horses and sheep in the present day West—with a bit of old-time cowboy life. *Family audience.*

Yorktown Sesquicentennial

(Continued from page 7)

Arrangements have been made with the producers whereby the films may be obtained on a reasonable rental basis. The Committee strongly recommends the presentation of these films in every community and is anxious to co-operate in completing preliminary arrangements. Thereafter the local committee will have the co-operation of the Yale University Press in perfecting the business arrangements and in promoting the success of the showing.

Since only a small section of the American people can actually attend the commemorative exercises at Yorktown, to be arranged by the National Government and the State of Virginia, these photoplays, reproducing accurately and vividly the events which took place at Yorktown one hundred and fifty years ago, will provide the means of recalling to the American people the significance of Yorktown.

Further information can be learned from Mr. Matthew Page Andrews, Chairman of the National Committee, Motion Picture Program, 849 Park Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland.

Some Unusual Films

(Continued from page 11)

seriously tries to reproduce an important modern historical incident. It tells the story of the famous Dreyfus trial that startled the world in 1894, and was made with the assistance of Captain Dreyfus himself, with access to all the documents of the case. The actors are good, and the film well worth seeing.—*Columbia.*

WITH the establishment of a museum in Hollywood for the preservation of objects and sets used in celebrated pictures, the movies take on another interesting educational aspect. A number of exhibits have already been entered, including the quaint wagon used in *The Gaucho*, bones of a dinosaur from *The Lost World* and the chariot from *Ben Hur*. Harry Crocker is founder of the institute.—*Movie Makers.*

Books and Films

READING furnishes a means of getting the most from the screen. While the movie in the theatre is chiefly for entertainment real educational value is also derived from such pictures as historical dramas, newsreels, travelogues and scientific short subjects. This value is increased, and the enjoyment, too, when experience and understanding of the subjects presented have been gained from wide reading. The libraries, schools and bookstores, realizing this, are preparing to emphasize especially book-film tie-ups during American Educational Week, November 9th-15th, and National Book Week, November 15th-21st. Better Films Committees can have a part in this community interest by knowing what are the selected book-films and working with library, theatre and school in support of them.

The National Board of Review, as usual, is publishing a list of films related to reading, it will be ready early in October. The price is ten cents a copy. Use the slip below for ordering.

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW,
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The Better Films Committee or Motion Picture Study Club plan has been found by many communities to be an adaptable and effective method of accomplishing telling organized local work for better pictures.

The purposes of the Better Films Committees affiliated with the Better Films National Council are:

To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression ;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review ;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings ;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

The Better Films National Council as an aid in carrying out these purposes furnishes an information service through its various publications.

Please use the coupon below and write for the publications you yourself would like or would like to have sent to interested friends.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE



Vol. VI, No. 8

October, 1931



The interrupted wooing in "The Guardsman" introducing Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne to the screen (see page 8)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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OCT 23 1931

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Sound Films a Factor in Education

At the invitation of President Hoover the Governors of all the States and the Commissioners of the District of Columbia were invited to select two children, a boy and a girl, to come to Washington to take part in a demonstration of certain types of educational pictures, held July 7th-10th. At the same time the U. S. Office of Education was requested to invite a group of educators to co-operate in devising tests to show the usefulness of certain types of sound pictures. The Office of Education also invited representatives from the Washington City Schools, from the National Education Association, and from George Washington University to help formulate the plan and conduct the experiment. Because of its interest in a program of production of sound pictures for use in connection with school work, the Educational Division of the Fox Film Corporation provided all facilities for the demonstration, including the new sound motion pictures which were used as the basis of the test. At a preliminary meeting the following plan was outlined:

1. To select from the films available a group representing different subject matter, different lengths of film, and different techniques of presentation to be shown as experimental films.

2. To devise tests on the subject matter of the films to be given on the first day of the demonstration and to be repeated on

later days after the showing of the films.

3. To assist in the tabulation of test results.

Following the invitation to the governors, all the states but Washington sent representatives. One girl did not attend all of the meetings. Therefore the scores of only 47 girls are reported. Two boys other than those selected as representatives accompanied their delegations and were allowed to take part in the experiment. Therefore the scores of 50 boys are reported, making a total of 97 children participating in the demonstration. Each state delegation was accompanied by an adult selected usually by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Since they were allowed to attend the showing of the films but not to participate in the tests they were asked on the last day of the demonstration to indicate their preferences among the pictures. Results of these preferences are tabulated for the adults who accompanied the children to Washington.

An assortment of sound motion pictures was shown to the Committee from which five were selected to be used during the demonstration. They were:

1. A one reel picture, *Toads*, by Dr. Clyde Fisher, Curator of University, College and Adult Education, The American Museum of Natural History. This presented Dr. Fisher in a three or four minute introduction to the subject, followed by a

series of pictures showing the development of toads through their life history, the pictures being accompanied by a running comment by Dr. Fisher.

2. A one reel picture, *Monarch Butterflies*, by Dr. Fisher. This picture was similar in presentation to the one on toads.

3. A three reel picture, *Volcanoes*, by Dr. W. W. Atwood, President of Clark University.

4. A four reel picture, *Glaciers*, by Dr. Atwood.

5. A four reel picture, *River Valleys*, by Dr. Atwood. These three pictures by Dr. Atwood show him giving blackboard demonstrations of his subject with now and then inserts of illustrative material concerning famous glaciers, volcanoes and river valleys. These pictures are thus a combination of lecture and illustrative material.

In addition to the five films selected for the tests, three others were shown:

1. A one reel picture, *America*, by Dr. Henry Johnson, Professor of History, Columbia University.

2. A two reel picture, *Dixie*, by Dr. Johnson. These pictures tell the story of our American songs. In each case the first part of the film shows Dr. Johnson as he tells the story of the writing of the song. This introductory lecture is followed by dramatizations of the important scenes in the history of the song.

3. A two reel picture, *Hats Off*. In this film "Uncle Sam" appears to explain to school children the story of the flag.

The Committee prepared a test on the subject matter of each of the five demonstration films. Each test consisted of 50 questions, 40 true and false, and 10 multiple choice. The demonstration covered a period of four days. On the first day the children took all five of the tests. On the three following days they saw the five sound films—two the second day, two the third day and one the fourth day—and immediately following the showing of the film the tests were repeated.

A very interesting analysis of the results of these tests has been worked out. It included such details as amount gained in seeing the pictures, who gained most in seeing the pictures, how much did individual pupils gain in the test, which sound film was liked best, indication of interest in subject matter and indication of approval of presentation method. This analysis has been published in pamphlet form and is available from the Fox Film Corporation, 850 Tenth Avenue, New York City.

The Fox Film Corporation has organized in its Educational Department a Woman's Bureau of which Mrs. Grace Allen Bangs is director. This Bureau brought the motion picture to the fore in the Exposition of Women's Arts and Industries held at the Hotel Astor in New York City beginning September 30th, by having a very effective demonstration of visual education films. Some of the films were the same as those used in the Washington experiment. A test was held at the Exposition, too, in which more than 100 New York junior high school pupils took part. These tests were conducted by Mrs. Esther L. Berg, assistant principal of one of the New York public schools. Mrs. Berg tells us that there was much interest shown in the tests and the results, and that there was particular interest expressed in the gain of 155 points shown by the leading girl contestant. She received 20% on Test I given the first time, and 100% on Test I given the second time; 25% on Test II given the first time, and 100% on Test II given the second time. Both the winning boy and girl won as awards, wrist watches presented by Mrs. Bangs.

Many members of the National Board were guests of Mrs. Bangs at these showings and they were delighted with the films shown, believing that they were most valuable adjuncts to teaching and at the same time very entertaining. One person said she wanted to go to school all over again to be able to learn in such an easy, entertaining way.

How Mickey Mouse Came About

Everyone sees "Mickey Mouse" these days. And while being amused by him the question continually comes to mind, "How does he do it? What's behind his cavorting?" We finally took our question to Columbia Pictures and here is their answer.

WALT DISNEY and his gang in Hollywood are making screen history with their single reel, synchronized, animated pen and ink cartoons. Throughout the country the antics of "Mickey Mouse," and the quaint creations in the Disney "Silly Symphonies" are causing the public to rock with laughter and are proving such box-office attractions that they are featured on the theatre marquee and in newspaper advertising. In some places the two subjects are being extensively exploited with campaigns equal to those of special productions.

The "Silly Symphonies" were the first of the animated cartoons to create a sensation. *The Skeleton Dance*, the first of this series, released by Columbia Pictures Corporation, the company that is now distributing the entire Disney output, caused quite a furore. It had its initial showing at the Roxy Theatre in New York City where it proved to be such a drawing card that it was immediately rebooked for a second showing at a later date. It marked the first time that any film, short or feature length was considered of sufficient importance to be thus rebooked at the Roxy.

On the occasion of its return, *The Skeleton Dance*, was featured upon the marquee and a subject for special review by New York newspaper critics. In Toronto, Canada, it enjoyed a four weeks' run at the Tivoli, an exceptional feat for a short subject.

Each succeeding release from the Disney studios, not only repeated the performance of its predecessor, but blazed new trails in the field of short subjects. Almost overnight the Disney outfit became the out-

standing producers of animated cartoons and took the lead as creators of short subjects.

Walter Disney, head of the organization, started out as a newspaper artist in Chicago but fate prevented him from getting very far. His work consisted chiefly of making lay-outs. From Chicago he drifted to Kansas City and tried to peddle his services to one of the newspapers there but was unsuccessful. He went from place to place working on small Western papers. As soon as he awakened to the fact that he was not apparently destined to become a great newspaper cartoonist, he went to Hollywood with a view to becoming a film director. His ambitions along that line fell short of maturing. He dabbled around the various studios, obtaining what odd jobs he could and learning the technic of film producing.

Ever awake to future possibilities, Disney saw a field in animated cartoons and set about to make a series. His first efforts were for non-theatrical showings such as church benefits, clubs and schools. They were known as *The Alice Films* and were cartoons of "The Adventures of Alice in Wonderland." Later he created "Oswald." Then came talking pictures and brought to Disney what appears to be the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

A little over a year ago the Cinephone Talking Picture apparatus was promoted. Walt Disney and his brother Roy saw a future in the Cinephone and they organized a studio and began synchronizing their animated cartoons.

From the start they clicked. It did not matter to the public whether a company with millions back of it was producing the shorts or not. They were funny and that was all anybody cared. There was a dearth of good single reel novelties and the theatre circuits were quick to see the enormous possibilities of the Disney "Silly Symphonies" and "Mickey Mouse Cartoons."

A crew of cartoonists was engaged by the Disney brothers to attend to the details while an orchestra was employed to provide the musical score. The studio is run in a most informal manner. The entire staff gets together on the films and works out the continuity. Each member voices his opin-



*Walt Disney and his cartoon creation
"Mickey Mouse"*

ion and occasionally they get into good old-fashioned vocal scraps over what should and what should not be included in the action of a cartoon. In the end, however, they get their difficulties ironed out and have a finished product of which they are all proud.

The pen and ink sketches which go into a single release number about 5,000. These are drawn by a staff of twenty artists working over a glass board with a light underneath it. The variations in each sketch are almost microscopic and require micrometer measurements.

As fast as a sketch is completed it is photographed in a specially constructed focused camera, one frame at a time. The

work is slow and it takes approximately a month to complete a six minute subject. It is difficult work and few artists can make the grade. About two years are necessary for an artist, skilled in cartooning, to master the technic of animation. Some of the outstanding newspaper comic strip creators have thrown up their hands in disgust when they started animating their creations. It is easy to comprehend this when one considers the mathematical precision required for each sketch in order to obtain the exact movement of an object in one-sixteenth of a second. This is the rate of speed required to avoid jerky motion upon the screen.

The Disney cartoons are different from other films in that the work commences with the preparation of the musical score which will express the action and the theme of the picture. The score for each release is the work of Carl Stallings, composer and musical director of the studio. When the melody has been arranged, the scenario is written under the score in much the same manner as the words of a song are printed. For each note several sketches must be drawn. The number required for each note is figured mechanically so that the animated cartoon will synchronize perfectly with the music.

While the sketches are being filmed by one camera, another is recording the musical accompaniment and sound effects. When both are completed, they are worked together into a single unit. The cost of each cartoon is approximately \$7,000. The biggest expense is the salary of the musicians, artists and sound experts who create the weird effects.

With the creation of "Mickey Mouse" Walt Disney realized his life ambition to become a famous newspaper cartoonist for "Mickey" is being released by King Feature Syndicate and runs daily in thousands of newspapers throughout the country. This newspaper publicity is creating a large

audience for the animated cartoons and exhibitors everywhere are taking advantage of the exploitation value to show the "Mickey Mouse" subjects.

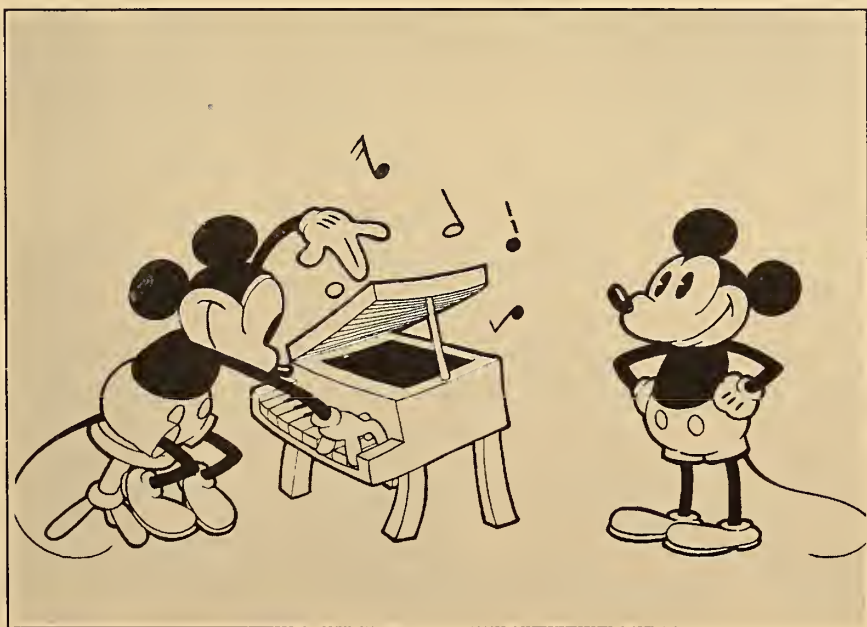
Another angle of interest that is being worked effectively throughout the country is "Mickey Mouse Clubs" for children. In these the theatres secure the co-operation of schools, women's clubs and other organizations and arrange tie-ups with stores and newspapers. The "Mickey Mouse Clubs" stage Saturday noonday reduced price matinees for members which are augmented by acts provided by these junior members.*

Through his ingenuity and the blending of two of the most entertaining diversions of today—the newspaper comic strip and the talking screen—Walt Disney with his associates has produced a novelty in one reel which does everything that the big feature can accomplish and has made film history.

**See article "The Active Juniors" (page 11) for some practical suggestions on how the Club plan has been worked out.*

A life-time of concentration on the making of pictures convinces me that the big pictures that capture the attention—and incidentally the pocket-strings—of the public are those that go out of the beaten path. Naturally, this pioneer is followed by a horde of imitators, but the point at issue is that the pioneer in question upsets every known law of tradition by bringing the unexpected—whether in theme, atmosphere or viewpoint. If I were, however, asked to formulate a law that might be termed basic for motion pictures, I would do so in one word. The word is "illusion." Under that heading comes everything that the experts and the theorists of dramaturgy and movie technique elaborate; construction, unity, character drawing. Illusion must shed its glamor over every picture whether of realistic or fantastic tenor. Let it have illusion and it is a fine picture; let it lack that and it is ready for the scrap-heap, no matter how well constructed it be."—Harry M. Warner, president of Warner Brothers Pictures.

World-
famed
screen
stars,
the
synchro-
nized
cartoons
of
the
Mickey
Mouse
Series



EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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The Guardsman

Adapted by Claudine West from Ferenc Molnar's comedy, directed by Sidney Franklin, photographed by Norbert Brodine, produced and distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The Cast

An actor Alfred Lunt
An actress Lynn Fontanne
A critic Roland Young
"Mamma" Maude Eburne
Lies! Zasu Pitts
A tailor Hermann Bing

THE stage and the screen accomplish one of their happier mergers in this picture. The gay and searching comedy that Molnar made out of his understanding of the special vanity which is part of the gift of being an actor, comes into the cinema with little of the apologetic vulgarization that is usually thought necessary to make a civilized play comprehensible to the masses for whom movies are made. Nor is the picture a mere photographing of the play, clinging timidly to only what might happen behind footlights: it is a real motion picture of the kind that the coming of sound and dialogue has created, moving freely wherever its plot takes it, with an adequate camera in attendance.

Some people will say—they have already said—that something of subtlety has gone from the screen version, that the tri-

umph of the wife is too definite, whereas on the stage it was not clear to everyone whether she was fooled and revenged herself by fooling her husband, or whether she did actually see through his plot from nearly the beginning. In a stage production that was made long before that of the Theatre Guild and was called "Where Ignorance is Bliss" there was hardly more doubt than there is in the film: the husband found his happiness in not knowing the truth.

The story, it might be explained, is about an actor and an actress who are husband and wife, and about their jealousies, professional and personal. To settle his apprehensions about his wife's fidelity the husband performs one of his greatest histrionic feats: he presents himself in the uniform and personality of a Russian guardsman to woo the lovely actress, and creates for himself a dilemma of peculiar delicacy—if his disguise succeeds and he wins her, what a triumph for his acting! And what woe to him as a husband!

This is the kind of drama that Molnar can build deftly and craftily, with many delightful exposures of the egos of his characters. The playwright's craftsmanship loses nothing in being translated to the screen,

BULLETIN

THIS MONTH
Honorable Mention
The Guardsman

PREVIOUS MONTHS
1931

Exceptional

The Beggar's Opera
Cimarron
City Lights
Comrades of 1918
Le Million
Rango
Sous les Toits de Paris
Tabu
Trader Horn

Honorable Mention

Bad Girl
The Blue Angel
Cain and Artem
City Streets
A Connecticut Yankee
Dishonored
East Lynne
Father's Son
The Front Page
The Public Enemy
Quick Millions
Skippy
Street Scene
Ten Cents a Dance

and the screen production has in it the two actors who made the play's success in America: Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. This pair of much admired players, before the camera, are what they have been upon the stage, and their admirers can go to see them in the movie theatres without any fear that their special charm has suffered in Hollywood. The camera, to be sure, might have given Miss Fontanne some of the magic service it lavishes on some less worthy ladies of the cinema, and made her more what movie-goers expect their beauties to be. But essentially both have made the perilous step from footlights to Klieg lights with no harm done—and to the definite enrichment of the cinema's variety.

The two stars are helped by a cast that is just about perfect for what it has to do, with Roland Young playing second fiddle so expertly that it is terrible to think what the whole harmony would have been like without him. The other parts are clowned in a more obvious manner—which is just as well, as a background for the unusual high comedy provided by the three principal actors.—J. S. H.

Around the World at Home

WHILE we are all curtailing travel budgets this year that does not mean that we have to forego the pleasures of seeing far-off countries. Although we may have to deny ourselves the pleasure of speeding by train, ship or plane to see the places we would like to visit there are other means at our disposal for seeing them. Let the motion picture screen, the sound reproducing device and the printed page be our substitutes. It is the case of "bringing the mountain" to us and how many films there are to do this. For example from the new pamphlet of Selected Book-Films compiled by the National Board of Review, there are many films listed that will carry us to far distant lands. Some of such pictures in this list are: *Rango*, which portrays jungle life in Sumatra; *Tabu*, a story of the South Seas photographed on the original locale; *Trader Horn*, containing most interesting shots of jungle and veldt life in Africa; *The Viking*, a picture of the life of the seal hunters in Newfoundland; *Al Yemen*, silent picture of Yemen on the Red Sea; *Napoli Che Canta*, containing genuine scenes of Capri and Naples; *Shiraz*, a romance of India entirely enacted by natives, which tells of the origin of the Taj Mahal; and *Stampede*, an exploration picture of the African Sudan.

This Selected Book-Films List is the current edition of a catalog prepared annually for Book Week, sponsored by the National Association of Book Publishers, which

CYRIL MAUDE, a favorite stage star for almost half a century, says, "Talking pictures not only provide entertainment but are also a great medium for dramatic art. They are adapted for both the heroic and the intimate. They are able to register the sweep and dash of great movement and the subtlest human emotions equally as well."



comes this year November 15th-21st. Since this year's Book Week observance has for its motive the "round-the-world" theme it is particularly gratifying that these are so many very fine films which are appropriate to this theme. The camera is no longer content to record the familiar but in the hands of adventuring directors and photographers goes afar to enable us all to see the world. And seeing the world gain thus a sympathy, an understanding and an appreciation of other peoples and other customs.

"WHY we go to the movies" is a question of wide interest since we practically all go. One writer, Mehran K. Thompson, author of "The Springs of Human Happiness," answers it this way, "We go to the movies for amusement and diversion, to get away from the realities of life and live for a while in the land of make believe. We enjoy the play more if we like the hero. He represents us. We forget us. All our strong passions and instincts are played upon. This is a form of self expansion that we do not tire of because we do not get enough of it in our work-day."

THE News Reel Theatre in New York City has been triumphantly successful, and there is every indication that the idea will be extended to other cities throughout the country. It should be. For the News Reel Theatre is so intensely popular that it must also be profitable. The price of all seats at all times is twenty-five cents; the show goes on continually and consists of nothing but news pictures from the Fox Movietone and the Hearst Metrotone News; and the place is packed with interested spectators morning, noon and night. Perhaps the most delightful feature of the News Reel Theatre is that you can enter it at any time without missing any of the previous plot of the picture that is on view.

In Defense of the Screen

By JAMES J. MONTAGUE

In the '90's an urchin of thirteen years old
Extracted a comforting thrill
From paper-bound volumes which vastly
extolled

The deeds of a certain Wild Bill.
But such books, on detection, were snatched
from his hand

By his highly respectable Dad,
Who said that the curse of such works in
the land

Was driving the kids to the bad.
But the lads on the sly read the wild
Western tales,
And few of 'em got into jails.

When burglars and gunmen were put on
the stage,

Which they were in the fullness of time,
It was said that all boys of a formative age
Would see them and turn straight to
crime.

But thousands of youngsters saw heroes
shot down.

Or sandbagged by criminals fell,
And if you go back to the little old town
You will find they turned out fairly well.
A few may perhaps have been not worth
their salt.

But it wasn't the theatre's fault.

I freely admit that some "speakies" are
bad,

But that is a matter of choice.

I have yet to see one which would lead a
young lad

To pilfer a banker's Rolls-Royce.

They may fill a young person with actorish
airs,

They may give him a vain, foppish look,
And put snappy cuts in the clothes that he
wears,

But they never will make him a crook.
And if he's too wild, or maybe too tame,
You can't hold the "speakies" to blame.

—N. Y. Herald Tribune.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

The Active Juniors

YOUNGSTERS like nothing better than to be club members associated with other youngsters in some interest that is all their own. Going to a picture show is fun for most all children but going to one that is their very own show is a much more important event. The Mickey Mouse Clubs in the theatres cater to just this desire of the children.

The first Mickey Mouse Club was organized by Mr. Harry Woodin two years ago in the Fox Dome Theatre in Ocean Park, California. The plan of organization and operation was so well worked out by Mr. Woodin that it has appeared in booklet form and has come to be an accepted plan followed by many theatre managers all over the country.

His plan of presenting especially selected pictures to children centering around the club idea holds so much in common with many of the details carried on by Better Films Committees in their junior matinee activities that we were happy when Mr. Woodin gave us permission to quote from his plan certain practical suggestions which we thought might be of value to Better Films groups, whether utilized in a Mickey Mouse Club or other special children's group.

The purpose of the Club is two-fold: (1) "It provides an easily arranged and inexpensive method of getting and holding the patronage of youngsters, and (2) Through inspirational, patriotic and character-building phases, it aids children in learning good citizenship, which in turn, fosters good-will among parents." The first purpose causes the plan to appeal to theatre managers and the second part causes it to appeal to parents and all those interested in the recrea-

tional welfare of children and the Club idea itself, as we have said, appeals to the children so it is an all-around successful idea.

The Mickey Mouse Club is unique in that it furnishes entertainment of the most popular nature—stage and screen—and at the same time, implants beneficial principles, the latter so completely shorn of any suggestions of "lessons" or lecturing, that children absorb them almost unconsciously.

A reading of the Creed shows what good principles are incorporated in the Club in language that the children will like. It is as follows: "I will be a square shooter in my home, in school, on the playground, wherever I may be. I will be truthful and honorable and strive always to make myself a better and more useful little citizen. I will respect my elders and help the aged, the helpless and children smaller than myself. In short, I will be a good American."

Mr. Woodin's thought behind this Creed has been explained in the following words: "Although primarily a plan to arrange a consistent series of matinees for a definitely organized group of youngsters, the Mickey Mouse Club has a broader and deeper significance. This is an age of organization, of co-operation, of fellowship. More and more, thinkers appreciate that exchange of ideas and unity of action, in carrying out those ideas which are good, are vital to the happiness and safety of the world. Grownups have their various associations and clubs for the furtherance of the best interests of the individual, of the community, the state and the nation. Boys and girls of today are the citizens of tomorrow. Taught how to work and play together—shown the meaning and value of fair play—encouraged to obey and respect

the aged and very young—given a start in this sort of thinking and living, they will be better equipped to take their place and do their part in the world.”

In the suggestions for starting a Club is noted the importance of getting the endorsement of Parent-Teacher Associations and like groups. This would be a simple matter in a community with an organized Better Films Committee as here all the groups are centralized and easily accessible for any co-operation with the theatre management.

Another point wisely stressed in the plan is that pictures booked for showing at the Mickey Mouse Club matinees should be pictures especially selected for children, clean and of particular appeal to them. It is suggested that a serial is good but that it should have the special endorsement of groups interested in children and not be left entirely to the theatre manager. This is true of all the pictures to be shown and is a wise suggestion for it secures the advance interest of the adults of the community and takes the sole responsibility off of the manager for the program which he presents to the children. A “Western” is considered sure of the approbation of the youngsters. The Fox Dome Theatre, according to Mr. Woodin, has shown with excellent results at its matinees, current or repeat showings of pictures starring Hoot Gibson, Jack Hoxie, Ken Maynard, etc. He further says, “Zane Grey stories are always a good bet and attract grown-ups as well as children. All out-of-doors subjects appeal. Pictures with juvenile stars make a hit with youngsters, a Jackie Coogan for instance, Douglas Fairbanks’ action features are sure-fire and Mary Pickford is mighty popular with little folks, particularly in pictures with children.”

The plan of program arrangement conducted at the Fox Dome was (1) Mickey Mouse cartoon or some comedy, (2) Formal Opening Ceremonies conducted by Club Officers, (3) Serial, and (4) Western or feature.

All sorts of intriguing ideas are presented in addition to pictures for prologues—contests, dances, special holiday observances, costume parties, treasure hunts, etc. A junior orchestra is said to be a desirable addition.

There is, of course, quite an important corps of officers, Chief Mickey Mouse, Chief Minnie Mouse, Master of Ceremonies, Color Bearer, Cheer Leader, to lead the special Club yell, Song Leader, to teach the special Club song, and Sergeant-at-Arms. All have important duties and help to keep the Club a real children’s affair.

The usual admission price is 10c, thereby making no burden on the families with several children. The suggested hours are at 11 A.M. or 12 noon, that is two hours before the theatre opens for its regular Saturday matinees.

There are some good “don’ts” also in this helpful plan. “Don’t let the children be exploited. Don’t stage pie-eating contests as mothers object to youngsters gorging and getting themselves and their clothes all mussy. Don’t have coin or candy showers where rushes will be created with a possibility of the children being hurt.” These are a few of them.

Since such word of the value of junior matinees is going around among the theatre exhibitors themselves it should not be difficult for those in a community desiring special programs for children, whether within or without a Better Films Committee, to have them if they rightly approach the already informed exhibitor. Perhaps they should ask now not for junior matinees but for a Mickey Mouse Club and then both exhibitor and children would fall in with the plan.

Mr. Woodin is now located in New York City as Division Manager of the Fox Theatres of the Metropolitan Area. He is continuing the special children’s programs in various of the theatres under his direction and we plan to use at a later time word of some of these successful matinees.

Children and the Movies

WE hear so much of the effect of motion pictures on children that it is really refreshing to hear something of the effect of the motion picture on the adult. And when it comes from one well prepared because of his particular activity, to speak about it, it is worth a consideration. Therefore we print below some paragraphs from a statement made by Dr. Garry C. Myers, Head of the Division of Parental Education, Cleveland College, Western Reserve University.

"Parents burn up a lot of energy condemning movies in general, and a few in particular. In the meanwhile most of them let their children go without much restraint, and slip to the theatre themselves about as often as they find it convenient to do so. I have a notion that most parental heat about movies has been expended off the vital factor.

"No doubt some pictures are entirely harmful for children, through unwholesome

suggestions which lead to undesirable conduct. Nevertheless, this aspect of the movies has perhaps been exaggerated. Children, particularly adolescents, pretty generally take the attitude: 'Well, that's just a movie stunt!' They come to expect certain performances which they consider as unreal, and accept them more or less as mere jokes. Even the bizarre and impossible so frequently presented are no doubt interpreted by them as movie tricks.

"Suggestions of relaxing marital relationship clearly appear to be harmful when exposed forever to the adolescent. But the greatest harm is not to them, I do believe, but to the young and middle-aged married couples, an item which seems to have been wholly overlooked by critics. Wives and husbands who live pretty closely in accordance with convention and standard of marital fidelity get a lot of suggestions from the movies which had never occurred to them before.

"For the young child under ten or twelve the movies may be over-exciting, contributing to disturbing dreams and general nerv-

Alice and the Mad Hatter at the tea party in the new film "Alice in Wonderland"
(see page 15)



ousness. The sleep he loses while attending, the neglecting of school work and the seeking of canned excitement, in addition to exposure to communicable diseases are all indescribable. Wise parents set definite age limits for first attending movies in a public theatre. Most children go much too young and far too often. How absurd that school children should be allowed to frequent the moving picture theatres on evenings before school days. Parents who are concerned with the school success of their children are strict about these matters. They find it easy to limit attendance by their children at the movies by naming definite nights and a definite number limit per month or school term.

"Schools and churches are in places doing a good deal to encourage better movies, some by showing good pictures in the church or school; others by directing children to those that are best and keeping them away from the less desirable ones. We will have better movies when we really want them, when we and our children attend only those most wholesome and avoid the poorer ones. The trouble is that we parents often get a sneaking satisfaction from those we would not like our children to observe. We enjoy the risqué more than we are willing to admit. Although we can easily fool ourselves that we are safe in any situation, there doubtless are a number of movies not so wholesome for us as we think. Maybe I am wrong. Surely we need recreation, and for many parents the movies, most of them, are very wholesome. There are times when for us to see one brings more happiness indirectly to our children than for them to see it themselves."



GEORGE Bernard Shaw has been known to criticize the movies for sundry things with more or less agreement from his public. This comment however upon

Are You Doing Motion Picture Writing?

THE question above does not mean are you entering the field of the scenarist, although it has been said that everyone who has seen a motion picture believes that he can and will some day write a story just as good—if not better—than those he has seen on the screen. But it is not to such writing we are referring but rather to writing *about* the movies.

Perhaps you have been assigned a club paper on one of the many phases of the cinema and while the day of writing it is far in the future, still the thought persists, just when you want to relax and think of other things, "Where am I going to find the material for that paper?" Well, here is the answer, "From the National Board's pamphlet and clipping reference file." Be your topic "The Effect of the Motion Picture," "Children and the Films," "A History of the Motion Picture" or what, we have something that pertains to it and many more.

Or it may be that a Better Films group wishes to take up a phase of study and would like such subject matter for reading and discussing at club meetings, here also this is useful.

Whatever the good use to which it is to be put this material is available to the readers of our Magazine, upon solemn promise to return it when through.

Let us know on what subject you desire help and we will gladly tell you what we have.

the film foreword is likely to cause sympathetic agreement pretty generally, "We soon shall have to sit for ten minutes at the beginning of every reel to be told who developed it, who fixed it, who dried it, who provided the celluloid, who sold the chemicals and who cut the author's hair."

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIOUS INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. *Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).*

Mature audience. *Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).*

Junior matinee. *Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.*

*****—*Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.*

ALICE IN WONDERLAND—*From the novel by Lewis Carroll, directed by Bud Pollard, starring Ruth Gilbert. Unique Foto-Films, 6 reels. A picturization of the famous Lewis Carroll story in which Alice in her dream follows the white rabbit down the rabbit hole and has all sorts of adventures. The dialogue is from the book and the settings have endeavored to keep the spirit of the story. It is a particularly appropriate picture for special children's matinees. Family audience. Junior matinee.*

***DER ANDERER (The Other One)**—*Starring Fritz Kortner. Tobis-Forenfilms, 7 reels. A dramatic story of a dual personality, resembling the Jekyll and Hyde theme but treated from the viewpoint of modern psychology. Fritz Kortner, one of the best actors to be found in motion pictures anywhere, is excellent at the head of a remarkably good cast. The picture is unusual in nearly all ways. Mature audience.*

THE BARGAIN—*Adapted from Philip Barry's play, "You and I," directed by Robert Milton, with a cast including Lewis Stone, Doris Kenyon, Charles Butterworth and Una Merkel. First National, 7 reels. An interesting picture of a man who gave up his career for marriage, and his son who manages to make a successful combination of both. Charles Butterworth and Una Merkel supply an agreeable comedy relief. Family audience.*

BLONDE CRAZY—*Screen story by Kubec Glasmon and John Bright, directed by Roy Del Ruth, with a cast including James Cagney and Joan Blondell. Warner, 8 reels. A consistently entertaining picture with excellent acting. It tells of the adventures of a young*

man who, with his girl partner, rises from a petty gambler to a big time racketeer—until his clever plans fail him. Mature audience.

THE CISCO KID—*Written by Al Cohn, directed by Irving Cummings, with a cast including Warner Baxter, Edmund Lowe, Conchita Montenegro and Norah Lane. Fox, 6 reels. The O. Henry character of the Cisco Kid, carried on from *In Old Arizona* and *The Arizona Kid*, doing a Robin Hood kind of outlaw pursued by Edmund Lowe as an army sergeant. A romantic and entertaining picture, with amusement, excitement and sentiment. Family audience.*

***DEVOTION**—*Adapted from Pamela Wynne's novel, "A Little Flat in the Temple," directed by Robert Milton, with a cast including Ann Harding, Leslie Howard and Robert Williams. RKO-Pathé, 8 reels. A rather old-fashioned piece of romantic fiction, with Cinderella and East Lynne elements, of a charming girl who disguises herself as a governess and gets involved with two men. Its tender and amusing moments give it a strong popular appeal, and the cast acts excellently. Mature audience.*

FANNY FOLEY HERSELF—*Adapted from a story by Juliet Wilbur Tompkins, directed by Melville Brown, with a cast including Edna May Oliver, Helen Chandler and Rochelle Hudson. RKO-Radio, 8 reels. The story of a popular vaudeville star and her two daughters whom a rich grandfather tried to buy away from her. Out of the ordinary both as a mother story and a stage story, with an excellent characterization by Edna May Oliver and a good cast. Done in Technicolor, which does not hurt it very much. Family audience.*

FIVE STAR FINAL—*From the play by Louis Weitzenkorn, directed by Mervin LeRoy, with a cast headed by Edward G. Robinson. First National, 9 reels. A faithful and stirring picturization of the melodrama about the tabloids and their ruthless ruining of lives to provide sensational reading for their public. With its excellent cast and direction it is more effective on the screen than on the stage. Mature audience.*

FRIENDS AND LOVERS—*Screen story by Maurice De Kobra, directed by Victor*

Schertzinger, with a cast including *Adalphe Menjou* and *Lily Damita*. RKO-Radio, 7 reels. An interesting though unconvincing story of two British army officers, both in love with a seemingly fickle woman, who remain loyal friends in spite of their rivalry. *Mature audience.*

*GET-RICH-QUICK WALLINGFORD—Adapted by *Charles MacArthur* from *George Randolph Chester's* stories, directed by *Sam Waad*, with a cast including *William Haines*, *Jimmy Durante*, *Ernest Tarrence* and *Leila Hyams*. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 10 reels. J. Rufus Wallingford brought up-to-date in a well-made and highly amusing romantic comedy of unscrupulous business methods. *William Haines* in the best part he has had in a long time and *Jimmy Durante* bringing a fresh kind of energy into screen humor. *Family audience.*

DER HAMPELMANN (The Puppet)—Written by *Gustav Beer* and *Fritz Lunder*, directed by *E. W. Ema*, with a cast including *Max Hensan* and *Lien Dyersn*. Tobis-Forenfilms, 8 reels. A novel German musical film, with a young man passing himself off as a puppet—"for love's sake." It is tuneful and amusing, with an attractive heroine. *Family audience.*

THE HARD HOMBRE—Written by *John Natteford*, directed by *Otto Brower*, with a cast headed by *Haat Gibson*. Hallywaad Pictures, 7 reels. A Western with a plot that moves out of the ordinary rut, with more legitimate comedy in it and more human characters. The lack of the usual shooting and rough melodrama does not lessen its interest but makes it more plausible. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

HEADIN' FOR TROUBLE—Screen story by *George Morgan*, directed by *J. P. McGowan*, with a cast headed by *Bab Custer*. Big Four, 6 reels. A good, fast-moving Western with the not unusual plot of a hero posing as a criminal till he gets the evidence to convict the gambler who has killed his friend. Incidentally he helps an old man, his son and his daughter. The boy who plays the son gives an excellent performance. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE HONOR OF THE FAMILY—From the novel by *Honoré de Balzac*, directed by *Lloyd Bacon*, with a cast including *Bebe Daniels*, *Warren William* and *Frederick Kerr*. First National, 7 reels. A sophisticated comedy about the routing of an adventuress, who is out for a doting old man's money, by a dashing younger member of the family. The scene has been laid in Budapest and a convincing Continental atmosphere has been achieved. *Warren William*, resembling both *Barrymore* brothers, is excellent. *Mature audience.*

IS THERE JUSTICE—Story by *Betty Burbridge*, directed by *Stuart Patan*, with a cast including *Henry B. Walthal*, *Rex Lease* and *Blanche Mehaffey*. Sana Art-World Wide, 6 reels. A drama dealing with the law and the conviction of two people for crimes of which

they are innocent. *Henry B. Walthal* as the district attorney is particularly good. *Mature audience.*

JEAN DE LA LUNE—Screen story by *Marcel Achard*, directed by *Jean Chaux*, with *Marceline Renaud* and *René Lefebvre*. Tobis-Forenfilms, 7 reels. A deft and characteristically French drama of a man who married his friend's mistress, and his struggle to keep her love. Excellently acted and directed, with some unusual uses of sound. *Mature audience.*

MY SIN—Screen story by *Owen Davis* and *Ade-laide Heilbran*, directed by *George Abbott*, with a cast including *Tallulah Bankhead* and *Fredric March*. Paramount, 8 reels. A well-worn plot about a woman with a past, worked out with many slow stretches of trivial dialogue. The acting is competent but fails to arouse much feeling. The production is mounted excellently. *Mature audience.*

PALMY DAYS—Screen story by *Eddie Cantor* and *Morris Ryskin*, directed by *Edward Sutherland*, with a cast including *Eddie Cantor* and *Charlotte Greenwood*. United Artists, 9 reels. One of the best American musical films, with an amusing plot, many hilarious episodes and *Eddie Cantor* at his funniest. *Family audience.*

PENROD AND SAM—From the novel by *Booth Tarkington*, directed by *William Beaudine*, with a cast headed by *Leon Janney* and *Junia Caghan*. First National, 7 reels. An entertaining version of the Penrod stories, for grown-ups as well as for children. It is merely the every-day happenings in the lives of Penrod and Sam—the death of Duke, Penrod's dog, is one of the best episodes. *Dorothy Peterson* and *Zasu Pitts* are very good as the mothers of Penrod and *Georgie Basset*. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PERSONAL MAID—From the novel by *Grace Perkins*, directed by *Monta Bell*, starring *Nancy Carrall*. Paramount, 8 reels. An amusing comedy drama concerning the trials and tribulations of a personal maid in a very wealthy family. The supporting cast is good. *Mature audience.*

*RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE—From the novel by *Zane Grey*, directed by *Hamilton McFadden*, with a cast including *George O'Brien*, *Marguerite Churchill*, *Naah Beery* and *Frank McGlynn, Jr.* Fox, 6 reels. A superior version of this often-done Western romance, directed with an excellent sense of romantic and dramatic values. It is well acted and contains many scenes that are unusually beautiful pictorially. *Family audience.*

THE ROAD TO SINGAPORE—From the play by *Roland Pertwee*, directed by *Alfred E. Green*, with a cast including *William Powell*, *Marian Marsh* and *Doris Kenyan*. Warner, 7 reels. *William Powell* in the familiar role of a rotter who turns out not to be so bad, rescues an unhappy wife from a tiresome husband. No great novelty to it, but it is interestingly done. *Mature audience.*

SHERLOCK HOLMES' FATAL HOUR—*Adapted from two of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's short stories, directed by Leslie S. Hiscott, with a cast headed by Arthur Wontner. First Division, 8 reels.* A rather long but interesting detective story, remarkably faithful to the style of the Doyle tales and with an excellent impersonation of the great detective by Arthur Wontner, recalling some of the best elements in William Gillette's portrayal. *Mature audience.*

SIDEWALKS OF NEW YORK—*Screen story by George Landy and Paul Gerard Smith, directed by Jules White and Zion Myers, with a cast including Buster Keaton and Anita Page. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels.* Buster Keaton as a rich philanthropist among the rough population of the East Side—slapstick and satire mixed with a gangster plot. Some of the gags are old, but many of them are fresh and amusing. *Family audience.*

SKYLINE—*From the novel "East Side, West Side" by Felix Riesenberger, directed by Sam Taylor, with a cast including Thomas Meighan, Hardie Albright, Maureen O'Sullivan and Myrna Loy. Fox, 7 reels.* Rather ordinary melodrama made human and moving by careful direction and good acting. The dialogue suffers from occasional unlikelike stiffness, but the photographing of New York's skyline and the erection of a skyscraper is stunning. *Family audience.*

***THE SPIRIT OF NOTRE DAME**—*Screen story by Richard Shayer and Dale Van Every, directed by Russell Mack, with a cast including Lew Ayres, William Bakewell and J. Farrell McDonald. Universal, 8 reels.* A very good football story, expertly done, telling a straight college story without dragging in superfluous sex interest. J. Farrell McDonald as a Rockne-like coach and Andy Devine stand out in a good cast, and the whole atmosphere is exceptionally interesting and appealing for this type of picture. The famous Four Horsemen take part. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS—*Adapted by Louis Weitzenkorn from the novel by Louis Bromfield, directed by Marion Gehrung and Dudley Murphy, with a cast including Clive Brook, Regis Toomey, Miriam Hopkins and Kay Francis. Paramount, 7 reels.* The crisis in the relations of two men and their wives is passed in twenty-four crowded hours that explore revealingly the lives of several people. Rather somber but well acted and directed with feeling and with an excellent knowledge of the camera. Some readers of the novel may be disappointed by necessary omissions in the screen version. *Mature audience.*

***THE UNHOLY GARDEN**—*Screen story by Ben Hecht and Charles McArthur, directed by George Fitzmaurice, with a cast including Ronald Colman and Estelle Taylor. United Artists, 8 reels.* A highly entertaining picture with much amusing dialogue and excellent acting. It is a strange story about a flock of criminals

living in a ruined desert palace in Africa, to which comes a clever and notorious bank robber in search of safety. He finds adventure and romance instead. *Family audience.*

WILD HORSE—*From the novel by Peter B. Kyne, directed by Richard Thorpe and Sidney Algier, starring Hoot Gibson. Hollywood Pictures, 7 reels.* A fine Western with excellent riding and some good comedy by a slow-moving colored boy. The capture of a wild horse is one of the thrilling episodes of the picture. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

The Guardsman—10 rls.

(See page 8)

Mature audience.

SHORT SUBJECTS

AROUND THE WORLD (Terrytoon)—*Educational, 1 reel.* Amusing cartoon of an around-the-world flight with many mishaps. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BASKETBALL NOS. 1, 2 and 3 (Christy Walsh All-American Sportreel)—*Universal, 1 reel each.* "Doc" Meanwell, Wisconsin "U" coach, puts his team through practice. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BEAUTY SECRETS OF HOLLYWOOD—*Paramount, 1 reel.* Technicolor exhibit of how a blonde and brunette make themselves beautiful. *Family audience.*

BELIEVE IT OR NOT NO. 1 (New series)—*Vitaphone, 1 reel.* Curiosities from Africa by Ripley. *Family audience.*

BELIEVE IT OR NOT NO. 12—*Vitaphone, 1 reel.* Ripley shows more strange sights from Africa. *Family audience.*

BLESS THE LADIES—*Universal, 2 reels.* An amusing farce of the Bugler Summerville and Sergeant Gribbon series, funnier than usual. *Family audience.*

BON VOYAGE—*RKO-Pathé, 2 reels.* A quarrelsome family and the trouble they made on an ocean liner. More novelty than usual in such comedies. *Family audience.*

BOSKO SHIPWRECKED (Cartoon)—*Vitaphone, 1 reel.* Bosko is shipwrecked and washed ashore on an island inhabited by cannibals. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

CURIOSITIES NOS. 225-226—*Columbia, 1 reel each.* Odd items from everywhere with silly comments. *Family audience.*

DOOMED TO WIN—*RKO-Pathé, 2 reels.* James Gleason as a trainer backing a man who does not want to be a fighter. Amusing. *Family audience.*

THE EYES HAVE IT—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Edgar Bergen does a very clever and amusing ventriloquist act. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

FACING THE GALLOWS (True Detective Stories)—*RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. A wealthy man is murdered and three are suspected but the final solution of the crime is strange and unexpected. *Mature audience.*

FINN AND CADDY—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Borrah Minnevitich and his gang of harmonica players playing excellent selections for those who like symphonic harmonica playing. *Family audience.*

FISHIN' AROUND (Mickey Mouse Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Mickey on a fishing trip with his dog. *Family audience.*

FIGHTING FUN (Spotlight Series)—*RKO*, 1 reel. A sail-boat race and a week-end on an ocean liner. *Family audience.*

FLY ME—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Animated cartoon of two flies and a spider. *Family audience.*

FOOTBALL FORTY YEARS AGO (Christy Mathewson All American Sportreel)—*Universal*, 1 reel. "Pop" Warner dresses his team in the style of 40 years ago and shows the football tactics of that time. Interesting and amusing. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

FOOTBALL THRILLS (Series)—*Columbia*, 1 reel each. No. 1—Military Tactics; No. 2—Air Attack; No. 3—Nerve Wreckers; No. 4—Behind the Line; No. 5—Backfield Strategy; No. 6—Precision. Excellent pictures of football plays of 1930. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE FORWARD PASS (Football for the Fan Series)—*Tiffany*, 1 reel. Howard Jones and other first-rate coaches tell about the forward pass in illustrations from important games. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

FUR FUR AWAY—*Paramount*, 2 reels. The two Jewish comedians, Smith and Dale, hunting for furs in Alaska. *Mature audience.*

HOT FEET (Oswald Cartoon)—*Universal*, 1 reel. The Lucky Rabbit is put on the spot. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE HUNTER (Oswald Cartoon)—*Universal*, 1 reel. The Lucky Rabbit goes to war. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

I SURRENDER DEAR—*Educational*, 2 reels. Slapstick comedy featuring Bing Crosby, the crooner. Rather better than the usual run of such things. *Family audience.*

INSIDE BASEBALL (Sport Review Series)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Bill Cummings explaining the tactics of baseball in a big league game. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

IN THE SHADE OF THE OLD APPLE SAUCE (Bimbo Cartoon)—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Bimbo trying to learn to play the violin with funny results. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

IT OUGHT TO BE A CRIME—*Paramount*, 2 reels. Amusing satire, featuring Ford Sterling and Marjorie Beebe, on a wife's penchant for moving furniture around. *Family audience.*

JUST MY MEAT—*Al St. John, Educational*, 1 reel. Dogs contribute to the humor of this comedy concerning hold-up men in a meat market. *Family audience.*

KICKING GAME (Football for the Fan Series)—*Tiffany*, 1 reel. Showing the importance of the kick in football. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE MEAD TRIAL (Wm. J. Barns Detective Series)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Court-room scene showing how the real murderer is trapped into confessing to the crime. *Mature audience.*

THE MUSICAL MYSTERY—*Vitaphone*, 2 reels. The book characters hold a party. *Family audience.*

NO HOLDS BARRED (Sport Review Series)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Gus Sonnenberg and other wrestlers in various holds. Brutal for those who do not like wrestling but interesting for those who do. *Mature audience.*

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 2—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Alfred Cheney Johnson tells about modern photography and other interesting items. *Family audience.*

PATHE REVIEW NO. 3—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Lovely views of an old Massachusetts village and some interesting and instructive shots of the autogyro. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PEARLS AND DEVIL-FISH—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. Pearl-diving and fights with devil-fish, interesting and exciting, and the incidental commentary more amusing than is usual with this type of picture. *Family audience.*

PIGSKIN PROGRESS (Spotlight Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Grantland Rice reviews the growth of football. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

RHYTHMS OF A BIG CITY—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. A tragedy takes place amidst the rush and noise of the city. Done with interesting camera angles. *Family audience.*

SCRATCH AS CATCH CAN—*Clark and McCullough, RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. Very funny comedy about high-pressure insurance salesmanship. *Family audience.*

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 11—*Columbia*, 1 reel. The usual screen glimpses of Hollywood life. *Family audience.*

SCREEN SOUVENIRS NOS. 2 and 3—*Paramount*, 1 reel each. Looking backward on the motion picture, interesting bits from as far back as 1905. *Family audience.*

SNAKES ALIVE—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Penrod and Sam have a disappointing time trying to turn a horse's hair into a snake. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SOUTHERN INDIA (E. M. Newman's Travel-talks)—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. A religious festival in India. *Family audience.*

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 13—*Universal*, 1 reel. Oddities from all over the world interestingly presented. *Family audience.*

STUNG—*Raymond Hatton*, *RKO-Radio*, 1 reel. A Liberty short story film with a courtroom drama boiled down to one reel with a surprise comic finish. Unusually well directed for a short film. *Mature audience.*

TED HUSING'S SPORTSLANTS—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Fencing, javelin and hammer throwing and rowing. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

TIMING (Spotlight Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Showing the value of timing in sports—golf, tennis, polo, etc. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

TRAPPED—*Universal*, 2 reels. A rather lurid but interesting detective story well acted for this type of picture. *Mature audience.*

TROUBLE (Cartoon)—*RKO-Radio*, 1 reel. A Tom and Jerry cartoon good for children. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

TURN OF THE TIDE (Supreme Thrills Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Floyd Gibbons' rapid chatter combined with newsreels which show the action of the 1st and 2nd Divisions at Chateau Thierry. *Family audience.*

USE YOUR NOODLES—*Roscoe Ates*, *RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. A tramp's adventures in a chop suey restaurant. Slapstick and funny. *Family audience.*

THE UTMOST ISLE (Vagabond Adventures)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Ceylon as seen by the Vagabond Adventurer. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

VAGABOND MELODIES (Hodge Podge Series)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Musical bits of New York's streets such as the organ grinder, German brass band, etc. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

VOICE OF HOLLYWOOD—*Tiffany*, 1 reel. Olsen and Johnson introduce many screen celebrities attending a Hollywood premiere. *Family audience.*

THE WEENIE ROAST (Krazy Kat Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Krazy Kat's adventures at a beach resort. *Family audience.*

THE WONDER TRAIL (Hodge Podge Series)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Interesting for those who like outdoor views of the West. *Family audience.*

JUST try to find for a re-showing a film that was popular several years ago and you will usually learn that it has been "junked" but there is one film that led a long and useful life before being laid away. *Out of the Shadows*, a film used by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in the fight against bovine tuberculosis, has ended its career after an intensive battle of 10 years. In all, 40 copies of the picture were made and the last of the 40 has reached the end of the trail. No other film circulated by the department has made a record approaching that of *Out of the Shadows*. It has been used in every anti-tuberculosis campaign waged since 1921, and has been shown in almost every rural community in the United States where dairy cattle are important. Released in 1921, 17 prints were put into circulation that year; in 1922, 12 more prints were put into circulation; and in 1923 as many more. These have been shipped into the field 1,644 times, bookings for a single print frequently running several weeks. Sixty-one prints of this film have been sold for use in foreign countries, including Uruguay, Belgium, Guatamala, the Union of South America and Great Britain.

NOW that indoor activities are holding the interest of various groups, and especially churches and church schools which are more and more becoming advocates of the motion picture as a tool of entertainment and instruction, the National Board has a suggestion to offer in the shape of a list of "Religious Films Suitable for Sunday Night or Other Showings."

NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW,
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Enclosed 10 cents for Religious
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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE



Vol. VI, No. 9

November, 1931



A characteristic scene from "Das Lied vom Leben" (see page 7)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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A Decade of Better Films Activity

Some months ago we inaugurated a "Who's Who" Department for the purpose of introducing our members to our readers. So far those presented have been members of the Executive Committee residing in New York City, but now we are going afar to bring to you some of the members in the field.

It is with pleasure that we present at this time one who has worked most loyally with the Board for a number of years, Mrs. James A. Craig, of Jacksonville, Florida. We asked Mrs. Craig to tell us about her motion picture interest and how it came to be, of her various related interests and about herself as well, as we wish in these stories to humanize our Board. — EDITOR'S NOTE.



Mrs. James A. Craig

THE club inter-
ests with which

I have been affiliated have been confined to work in the Parent-Teacher

Association and in patriotic organizations. I was a member of the constitution and by-laws committee of the second Mothers' Club to be formed in Jacksonville, later serving as president and vice-president and one of the organizers and first president of the Federation of Mothers' Clubs, now the Duval County Council of the Florida Congress of

P.-T. A., also first president of the Duval High School P.-T. A.

My patriotic activities have been with the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Daughters of American Colonists. As a member of the National Officers' Club of the D. A. R., I served on the board of directors for several years. I have held various chapter and state offices including vice-regent and regent and served also as state and chapter chairman of various

committees and as vice chairman of several national committees in the D. A. R. I am

now vice-chairman of the National Correct Use of the Flag Committee in charge of the South Eastern division, including ten states and Cuba. I continued for four consecutive years as State Chairman on Better Films.

Naturally, I have always been interested in motion pictures and have never forgotten the first "cinematograph" which I saw in a tent in Niagara Falls in the last of the nineteenth century. How I thrilled to see the horses galloping to a real fire, drawing behind them the hook and ladder manned by the fire laddies! I could fairly hear the bells warning the people to get out of the way and, of course, could see the rush of the crowds. That horses and men could be portrayed in motion was certainly a marvel to me.

Some years later as State Vice-Regent of the D. A. R., I attended a meeting of state presidents of various national women's organizations called by Miss Ruth Rich immediately after her appointment by the governor of Florida as chairman of the Advisory Committee to the National Board of Review provided for by a law adopted by the state legislature of 1921. At this time Miss Rich urged the formation of community better films groups and suggested that those present should start the work in their respective communities.

Acting on her advice I took steps to form the Better Films Committee of Jacksonville and have served as its president since that time. The name has been changed long since to the Better Films Council of Jacksonville and it numbers in its membership representatives of the leading patriotic, civic and cultural organizations of the city as well as having on its rolls names of individual members who are deeply interested in motion pictures.

When my boys were small I used to find it so difficult to judge the suitability of pictures for their entertainment, having nothing but the theatrical publicity on which to base my opinion. Hence I have taken particular interest in compiling the Weekly Photoplay Guide for the papers here based

on the selections of the National Board of Review, feeling that it might aid other mothers in selecting their children's entertainment. Also the junior matinees have been near to my heart for the reason that they not only provide wholesome entertainment but also tend to fit the child to discriminate between the good and the poor pictures.

My parents were both natives of New York State, but adopted citizens of Florida where I was born. I lived in South Carolina and in Providence, Rhode Island, in my early youth. You see I am a southerner, but with a partly northern background. I was married in 1901 to James A. Craig of Jacksonville, formerly of New Jersey. I have two sons, both officers in the United States Navy, and one daughter still a student in high school.

The years of contact with Mrs. Craig have convinced us of her broad outlook and liberal viewpoint, perhaps this is due to her different interests and varied background. Anyway, it has made her a valuable member of the Board. And here is proof of her great interest, for although being so far from New York City, she has attended all of the seven Annual Conferences of the National Board.

THE story below of the Jacksonville (Fla.) Better Films Council junior matinees, came to us from Mrs. D. C. Maner, secretary of the Council. She wrote it, she said, just before her departure for the north and as interesting as the story is more interesting we might say, is Mrs. Maner's visit north, for she is at the home of her son-in-law, the celebrated American composer and music critic, Deems Taylor, whose opera "The King's Henchman" was produced at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City. We wish for a "Famous-People-At-Home" column and a story from Mrs. Maner for it, as her daughter is the noted actress and playwright, Mary Kennedy. However, we do hope for something

(Continued on page 17)

Hope in Sound Not Talk

We are pleased to present here the story of an interview with the novelist, H. G. Wells by Terry Ramsaye, historian of the screen and editor of the Motion Picture Herald from which this is reprinted.

MR. H. G. WELLS, who is a seer and a philosopher if you agree with him, and just a novelist if you do not, arrived recently from England for an American sojourn and tour of several weeks. He may or may not have some motion picture transactions on his hands before he sails home. He does not appear to care very much either.

Chatting most informally and unofficially, Mr. Wells was was able to make a number of pungent observations about the motion picture industry. Showmen are, he finds, "dreadfully illiterate and unintelligent" about their wares. He notes that the motion picture has outgrown itself and become too imposing. He thinks the silent picture had begun to be an art and that many of the present talkies are abominations, destroying motion picture followings and tending to "educate a demand for the stage."

Mr. Wells was winding up a busy morning of dictation to his secretary in the sunny corner of Nelson Doubleday's office down on Madison Avenue, when I entered the picture. He is a smallish chunky bit of a

man, not at all the dominant physical type that the book jacket photographs and the book counter cut-outs would make you believe. It is well over three decades since he left the instructor's rostrum in the classroom to begin the literary career which has made him a world figure, but there is something in his manner that suggests the stamp of the school master has never been entirely obliterated. There is no pretense about him or personal stagecraft, and unlike the many visiting Englishmen he is neither so casually or carefully dressed that one notices what he wears. The lines in his face suggest that he has spent a lot of his lifetime smiling quietly to himself about things. He speaks rapidly and lets punctuation take care of itself.

The conversation began with a bit of badinage between us, in which Mr. Wells so highly appreciated what I had written about him and I so warmly appreciated what he had written about me. This went

over unanimously without even a hint of disagreement.

The fact is that a few years ago, mulling through some rather old British patent papers, I came upon the discovery that Mr. Wells and Mr. Robert W. Paul, an instrument maker, of London, came dangerously near to inventing and launching the photodrama full born as an art form in the far year of 1895, as a consequence of Mr.



H. G. Wells

Wells' then new story, "The Time Machine."

Mr. Wells now with mock solemnity avers that I have made him the "inventor of the cinema." Despite the fact that the Paul-Wells project never got beyond the papers in a patent application, Mr. Wells, down all the intervening years, has been decidedly screen conscious, and one of his most recent works, a novel, "The King Who Was a King," was written in a quasi scenario form.

"You have done everything about the motion picture except to make one," I remarked across Mr. Doubleday's imposing antique walnut. "I imagine that the producers have been after your material often enough, too—just what seems to be the matter?"

"My dear fellow," exclaimed Mr. Wells, "they have, they have—but what dreadfully illiterate persons these showmen are!

"Why, do you know they come to me every now and then for a picture on Peace and I refer them to 'The King Who Was a King.' Then they ask me what it is about," Mr. Wells tossed up his hands in a gesture of surrender. "It is available in English, German and French, and they want me to tell them what it is about."

The preposterousness of it gave him another merry chuckle. He is full of chuckles, because from where he sits this is not so bad an old world, after all.

"Why, do you know," he confided, "one American producer asked me to submit a two-thousand word synopsis of it. If they cannot find out what it is by reading it, I shall never be able to tell them."

Mr. Wells' attention was drawn to a number of recent assertions in various quarters that some signs in the sky portend that the stage may yet turn the tide of dominance against the screen.

"Yes—possibly—" he responded, "I sometimes expect that the talking picture is just educating an audience and giving it an appetite for the stage.

"The silent picture was another art, a swift plausible medium, but the talking picture—how often so absurd. We see a man

a half a mile away and we hear him talking! The silent picture had breadth and scope. Now they drag the infernal microphone around, and there is such an infinity of difficulty and labor that the entertainment is squeezed out. It is all too much bother."

It seems, however, that Mr. Wells is not in despair about the future of the art. He feels that in time the "sound picture," as opposed to the "talking picture" so highly dependent on dialogue, will become great.

"The cinema has become so pretentious that the cinema habit of its patrons is being broken," remarked Mr. Wells. "Going to the cinema now tends to be an event instead of a casual thing. In my case, for instance, I can remember, back during the war, when I was much under stresses and strains, I used to drop into the cinema every day, for an hour, perhaps two hours. But now it is a different thing. If one is to go to the cinema now, he must wash his face and put on a white collar and be a good boy and get there on time at 8:30 o'clock, sharp. And I'm damned if I'll stand for it."

The talk drifted to product and immediately hit again on the theme of overreaching pretentiousness. Mr. Wells commented upon Charles Chaplin's having spent something like three years on one picture.

"I wish," he said, "that he would make a great many more and less perfect and less imposing pictures—do the lightly done spontaneous laughable things that we used to enjoy so week after week."

Mr. Wells agrees that the motion picture could be much greater if it were not so "important."

Red Tape and the Tea Pot

A requisition went through the Accounting Dept. of Universal Pictures the other day calling for a quarter of a pound of tea, and a pot of marmalade. Carl Laemmle was entertaining H. G. Wells in his office at 730 Fifth Ave. It was in this wise that Mr. Wells replied to his invitation:

"I could look in at 730 on Tuesday at 4:30 if you will pander to my English vice of tea drinking at that time."

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Das Lied vom Leben (The Song of Life)

Written by Victor Trivas and Dr. H. Lechner, with music by Friedrich Hollander and H. Adams, directed by Alexis Granowsky, photographed by Victor Trinkler and Heinrich Balasch. Produced by Tobis and released by Tobis-Foren-films.

The Cast

The man.....Albert Mog
The woman.....Margot Ferra

THIS importation from Germany is a picture bound to stir up controversy, whether among ordinary movie-goers or among aesthetes, whether on the basis of its subject matter or its treatment. It has already done that in its homeland, where it aroused enough feeling to stop its being shown in many German cities. (Not on moral grounds, it must be added.)

It is a completely unconventional film, ranging about through symbolism and lyricism and realism according to no known laws of the different isms. Whether it is justified in so doing must depend, of course, on its effect—and its effect varies according to the tastes, prejudices and sensitiveness of the audience. But no one can look at it without strong reactions.

It shows a certain resemblance to King Vidor's *The Crowd* in

having for its principal characters a man and a woman who might be any man and any woman trying to live their lives in modern society; representative rather than individual. The plot has a quiet definite beginning, an extremely indefinite end, and not much middle, in the sense of a development from beginning to end. The girl appears first at a party given to announce her engagement to an extraordinarily horrible old rich man. The prospect of marrying such a creature drives her away from the

macabre gathering, so desperate that she sees nothing to do but throw herself into the harbor. A young man rescues her: they love, marry and have a baby, and the end is a vision—or is it actuality?—of the boy grown up and gone to sea, and the mother always thinking of him as her baby.

The first part—which seems like the beginning of a usual kind of story of a particular girl and her problem, but photographed in an unusual way—is a combination of accentuated realism and symbolism. Around a table sit un-dead, un-living figures, stoking food into their mouths and guzzling champagne. Each one is horrible, and the horrible details of their horribleness are isolated and magnified by the camera. In the midst of them

BULLETIN

THIS MONTH
Exceptional
Das Lied vom Leben
Honorable Mention
Romance Sentimentale

PREVIOUS MONTHS
1931

Exceptional
The Beggar's Opera
Cimarron
City Lights
Comrades of 1918
Le Million
Rango
Sous les Toits de Paris
Tabu
Trader Horn

Honorable Mention
Bad Girl
The Blue Angel
Cain and Artem
City Streets
A Connecticut Yankee
Dishonored
East Lynne
Father's Son
The Front Page
The Guardsman
The Public Enemy
Quick Millions
Skippy
Street Scene
Ten Cents a Dance

is the girl—a quite ordinary girl, but alive, shrinking from the death-in-life that crowds around her. The other people are like machines that can go only after enough fuel has been shoveled into them: the food and drink heats them into a galvanized kind of motion—they cackle at inane jokes, when a frenzied jazz-band shrieks rhythm at them they drag themselves through a leaden parody of a dance, they make lewd gestures toward passion. The girl runs away from it.

The deliberate under-scored realism of this episode might be considered enough to put across its meaning, but it is reinforced by symbols repeated and multiplied extensively; such as champagne glasses ranged in rows and tiers, revolving, reeling—skeletons jiggling like automatons. Which gives pictorial accent to the excess and smothering mass of the dead-alive luxury threatening to engulf the girl. This symbolism is repeated in her flight, through streets flashing with electric signs that advertise sordid expensiveness in endless multiplication.

When the young man—a clean-looking, quite ordinary young man—stops the girl from jumping off a dock, the picture swings into symbolism again: raised above the machinery and ships of the harbor in a huge steam-shovel, the man and the girl and a third person, who might be a doctor or a philosopher or a prophet, look down upon life while a voice sings of the glory of work and the doctor proclaims the gospel of vitality: the will to live, to produce, to progress. Then the man and girl are in a sail boat, and bathing in the sea, and loving—living amid clean air and clean water while a voice sings of how to bring Paradise again to earth. The girl falls asleep and has a nightmare about the people she has left—caged creatures in a zoo, cage after cage of them. She awakes screaming—but the arms of her lover are safely about her.

There is an extraordinary lyric quality to this section. It hardly needs a voice to sing its meaning: the pictures sing it—they have the rhythm of music, the lilt of song.

This section of pure poetry is followed by one of pure prose, the hospital scene which caused all the disturbance in Germany and raises occasional cries of indignation in America. It is a literal picture of an obstetrical operation, photographed in a fashion that conceals gory details—though it implies them—and yet gives a swift and vivid panorama of clean efficient surgery fighting against death to bring another life into the world. It is an extremely dramatic episode, which manages to give the young husband and wife the most individual and personal quality that they have in the whole picture while at the same time creating about them an atmosphere that is impersonal and universal.

What is left is made explicit in three more songs—the Song of the First Cry which an unseen voice sings, a Lullaby which the young mother sings, and a Sailors' Song, again by an impersonal voice. Again the pictures, as well as the voices, sing, but with more idea in what they say and rather less of pure mood and emotion. The new world of the new child, though it seems at first to be all his, is not his alone—he is one of a crowd, and among the crowd he must stand proudly in his place. But while he is a baby he is like all babies, even among the beasts and birds, cradled in his mother's love. Afterwards the playthings—the toy animals and all—will gradually merge into the real things of life: he will go from the shelter of home and fare about the world while his mother clings to her dream that still her *baby bleibt klein*.

What is one to call the whole thing, with its unusual mixture of fantasy and fact, symbol and letter, sermon and song? There is no defining name for it except that it is a genuine motion picture, wherein light and shadow fashion shapes upon the screen that work powerfully on the emotions of the on-looker. Just how they work is an individual matter, and one can only report one's personal reaction. The first time I saw the film I was impatient and exasperated by the repetitious and—it seemed to me—unneces-

sary symbolism of the beginning, which threw me into a defiant mood toward all the rest of the picture that kept its varied elements from fusing into a whole with a unified effect. It seemed remarkable and important, but it left me with an unpleasant irritated feeling. But seeing it a second time made me wonder if I weren't just a weather-cock, the effect was so different, so moving and so satisfying. I can come to no conclusion but that I have too strong an instinctive resistance to insistent novelty to absorb and understand and accept it all at once—the effect of sudden strangeness must be given a chance to wear off so that my own background and the picture can adjust themselves to each other. This they did with surprising rapidity, and I must urge anyone who cares about the growth of the motion picture to see this film if possible, and if seeing it once yields little but bewilderment and repulsions, to see it again. He will find in it how the abstractions of such films as *Ballet Mechanique* can be given human meaning and dramatic significance; how a bare handful of not particularly exciting incidents—some of them so indefinite they may hardly be called incidents—can weave and fuse into a picture of life; how moving shapes can with no help of words be poetry, full of meaning and emotion. To find all that in one picture, I take it, is to find something significant in the cinema.—J.S.H.

Romance Sentimentale

Directed and produced by Eisenstein and Alekxandrov; photographed by Tisse. Distributed by Tobis-Forenfilms.

IT is not certain how much part Eisenstein, and how much Alekxandrov, had in producing this cinema, with music, which presents the Russian concert artist, Maria Guiy; certainly Tisse did all the camera work; but its importance lies to some measure in its being the first film in sound to be made by this famous trio of

Russians, indicating as it does the manner in which Eisenstein and Alekxandrov would apply that sound montage that the former has discussed so much. To a no lesser degree its value resides in its significance as interpretive cinema pattern—a combination of abstraction and symbolism.

Yet scarce one, if indeed any, of our critics in this country bestowed it with the slightest recognition, let alone word of appreciation, upon the occasion of its appearance on the Cameo Theatre program in New York City. And this is no more unfortunate than strange—was it that they failed to associate in importance this little work, so fragile, innocent and tender, with the mathematically dynamic art that gave to the screen *Potemkin* and *Ten Days that Shook the World*, and the no less mathematical but more earthy and human film, *Old and New*?

If so, it can be explained. For at first glance, *Romance Sentimentale* would seem to have been made on a holiday, as if the masters of montage and the application of art to the utility of forwarding a social tenet, had rested from their labors on the revolutionary document, and given over their feeling and service to the simple recording of a mood of beauty, touched even by that nostalgia that once affected the heroines of Chekov, sweetening Slavic literature and drama, but which it is now forbidden to think of as Russian. Looking deeper, however, one may perceive in *Romance Sentimentale* the same meticulous clear use of the cinema tool, the same intellectual preoccupation with method in the medium, the same insistence that the film create, that mark those (cinematically) revolutionary works that justly, and because of the same integrity of craftsmanship and execution, have given Eisenstein and his co-workers their high artistic place.

The film is just what its title implies—a mood of the heart, an autumnal dream of, and desire for, the coming, perhaps, of love—the dream of a woman over the keys of her piano, who feels about her the present quietude and decay but also thinks of the far-away spring and of the life and passion

it will renew when it shall come again. On the side of motion pictures, it is a colloquy spoken in the language of images—expressive first of something gently sad and lonely, later of what is quick and exultant; and on the side of sound it is a meditation and a rhapsody rendered in the language of music. Note for image and image for note, the whole is exquisitely bound together, building to one end, creating one impression—going a distinct step ahead in combining the audible and visual in a pattern that produces enchantment and emotion.

These are the pictures: Trees sweeping and falling across the screen—dark shots of silent trees reflected in pale still water—the leaves and clouds of autumn—a dim room in which a hearth-fire burns, lighting the ornaments on mantle and table—a listening hound crouched on a cushion—a woman sitting at the piano, her head defining itself slowly as the shots grow more luminous—then buds and branches and blossoms—and suddenly high ecstatic clouds—and a great white piano strangely standing on a hillock amid open fields under the clouds, the player radiant and joyous. And now bursts the contrast of expectancy and consummation, projected from the early tones of loneliness and sadness of the fall—the bleakness so beautifully accented in the beginning of the film by that quiet fire flickering in the grate.

In no other instance has Tisse been more happy in his photography, more completely successful in gaining the precise effect desired. To the voice of the shadowy, solitary figure singing at the piano, one *feels* his shots, now of the abstract, now of the objective, as they are isolated and grouped again in the montage-cutting that ever moves and falls in cadence with the effect of the piano notes and the voice. Of course, it is difficult to gauge just how much the lovely Mme. Guay contributes to the net effect. One would like to see the film run once without sound. It is almost certain, as suggested, it would stand up remarkably on its own. On the other hand, as also suggested, it is altogether probable that such a

test would but give assurance that it is among the very few films in which the sound and the image are legitimately bound to each other for no other purpose than to generate a form that can really become one of art in no sense popular. W. A. B.

WOULD you like to see some of the unusual pictures not generally released in the theatres in your town? There are many foreign films which would be of interest to students of the screen and to all those who wish to supplement their knowledge of the developments and use of the screen, gained through seeing the American cinema in its silent and sound form, by a study of the foreign cinema. Such pictures are available and the possibility of seeing them is at hand if enough groups interested, and surely where there are Better Films Committees or Motion Picture Study Clubs there would be, promise their local exhibitor that if he will bring such pictures they will see that he is assured of an audience. In order not to interfere with regular theatre showings such special performances can be arranged as midnight showings (really meaning 11 o'clock), or as morning showings, this latter time however prevents some people from attending but the whole thing can be arranged to meet local wishes and conditions.

Perhaps your exhibitor would like to show such pictures but is uncertain of the demand or perhaps on the other hand he has no thoughts for pictures outside of those he gets through the regular channels of distribution but would be willing to get others if informed about them, so here is word of an example of pictures available and the source.

The Russian distributors, Amkino, are making special terms to exhibitors now and have such interesting pictures as *The End of St. Petersburg*, *Cain and Artem*, *The Five Year Plan*, *Soil and Storm Over Asia*, with English subtitles. Amkino Corporation's address is 723 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

THE Delaware State Federation of Women's Clubs Motion Picture Chairman, Mrs. Edmund M. Barsham of Wilmington, has carried on her work with such unflagging interest that its results have been most encouraging. A recent story in the city press reporting a meeting in Wilmington said, "Mrs. Edmund M. Barsham, chairman of the committee who presided was congratulated on all sides for her untiring work in behalf of the movement of the Federation of Women's Clubs for the improvement of the films shown, not only in Wilmington, but throughout the whole State, and for her work along with that of the other members of her committee, in keeping the patrons posted regularly each week about films."

The plan outlined at this meeting in September was described by Mrs. Barsham in the following words, "You have been invited here to become acquainted with the plan of the Motion Picture Committee of the Delaware State Federation of Women's Clubs, insofar as it is applicable to Wilmington, and to give to it constructive suggestions.

"It is desirable that it be understood that at this time the scheme in no way contemplates any legislative action or any criticism of local exhibitors, or in fact of any individual. It is purely an educational program, interfering in no way with the policy which any particular group may wish individually to promote, its only object being to assure for Wilmington the best in pictures through cooperation and study of the subject.

"It is hoped, if it is felt a permanent civic organization is needed, that such an organization be formed to function with a chairman and executive committee of say fifteen members, both men and women. Such an organization might be known as the 'Better Films Committee of Wilmington.'

"The work of this group would mean

definite and systematic study of the production, distribution and exhibition of films through speakers able to explain as many phases of the subject as possible. To lend assistance to the local exhibitors when the best in pictures are shown and to protest, with the combined strength such a group can have, through the proper channels when harmful or objectionable films are shown."

The groups represented at the meeting were: the Delaware State Federation of Women's Clubs, Y. M. C. A., Y. W. C. A., Delaware Safety Council, Wilmington Civic Association, Junior League of Wilmington, Chamber of Commerce, Community Service, Kent County Committee of the Federation of Women's Clubs, Men's Club of Westminster Church, Wilmington Council of Churches, Boy Scouts of America and many local churches and individuals.

Many of the representatives took part in the discussion bringing out the following points: that the public stay away from films they do not like and patronize only those worth while from a cultural and educational standpoint—pictures like *Disraeli* in which George Arliss played here had to be withdrawn because of small attendance; the Council of Churches desired to assist in the movement; the Men's Club of Westminster Church would like to see the movement given city-wide representation; fine results were obtained in an educational way with good films shown school children; the Secretary of the Boys' Division of the Y. M. C. A. stated he felt much good could be obtained by displaying the better types of films to boys.

With so many of the city's influential citizens interested and with the work already accomplished by the Committee as a background such a city-wide Council as suggested is certain of accomplishment. Another point bespeaking success for the work

is the fact that they are not going to attempt the impossible but are going to concentrate on doing the best with the material at hand. The ideal of clean, cultural entertainment was expressed at the meeting, but it was generally agreed that as an ideal, it was hardly approachable at the present time. The consensus was to the effect that, keeping the ideal in view at all times, the next best is the display of films that were clean and at the same time attracted patrons and subsequently paid exhibitors.

The Committee in its contact with the exhibitors in the preparation of the Photoplay Guide which has been appearing regularly in the local papers has always been considerate of the exhibitors. Their cooperation was praised at the meeting and Mrs. Barsham said, "Full recognition was given by the Committee at all times to the fact that picture house managers are only human and are expected by the large corporations controlling them to show box office profits."

Following the discussion it was voted to have Mrs. Barsham select a committee of three to formulate plans with a view to carrying on the work of the Federation Committee and widening its representation and scope. The Committee of three chosen to work with Mrs. Barsham includes the first assistant at the People's Settlement, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, and a representative of the Y. M. C. A.

Postal cards with reply card attached have been sent to every organization whose name has so far come to the Committee, asking groups if they are interested in sending a representative to a permanent city organization. If so, if they will contribute to the expense of such a city organization, any amount the group may desire, and if so, how much. No definite amount is asked from the groups because until a survey of the service desired by the groups is made, it is impossible to estimate the expense of printing, mailing, et cetera. All work done is volunteer, actual expenses only being necessary. Groups are asked if they would like to receive regularly previews of pic-

tures to be shown in Wilmington, a week in advance of the showings, and if they will organize a motion picture committee in their group.

The month of October was given for reply as some of the information asked for in the questionnaire could come only following official meetings of the various groups approached.

We believe this is such a workable and wise method for any group to adopt in its endeavor to enlarge its better films interest into a city-wide organization that we are pleased to present it here and hope that we will be able to pass on further word of accomplishment of this group as it comes to us from Mrs. Barsham.

A civic better films interest which had its inception last winter and has been growing ever since in attention and usefulness is that of the neighboring communities of Maplewood and the Oranges in New Jersey. This interest started in the Woman's Division of the Chamber of Commerce, through their concern in providing suitable motion pictures for children in the local theatres. At the initial meeting members of the Homemakers' Association protested against permitting children to attend unsuitable pictures. The president of the Woman's Division suggested special children's matinees, Saturdays and holidays, where the program, instead of supplementing regular shows, should be composed entirely of films appropriate for youngsters. The executive secretary of the Chamber of Commerce at the very beginning warned against advertising undesirable pictures by censuring them by name.

A spring meeting brought representatives from various groups in the communities, such as the D. A. R., Junior League, Child Study Group, Girl Reserves of the Y. M. C. A., Girl Scouts, College Club of the Oranges, Community Club, Women's Club, Homemakers' Association, Home and School League, Federation of Women's

Church Organizations, ministers and directors of Religious Education, Philacoustic Association, the Librarian of the Public Library and the Mayor.

The activities of this Committee as a civic interest development have become so notable that they were described in an issue of the *American City Magazine*. This is a hopeful sign for it recognizes the better films activity as something more than simply an individual club interest but rather as a real unified community interest.

The able chairman of this Committee is Mrs. Ralph A. Peters who is also a member of the New Jersey State D. A. R. Better Films Council. Mrs. Peters reports that the guide to better pictures as prepared by the Committee is published in local newspapers, posted in different churches and assembly places and seems to be filling a real need.

MRS. CHARLES E. TONSOR, Chairman of Motion Pictures of the Long Island (N. Y.) Federation of Women's Clubs, although she has many interests, is untiring in her motion picture work. She works, as all wise chairmen do, both with her club groups and with the exhibitors.

Among fifty clubs she sent out a questionnaire from which the following are quoted:

- "1. In what section are you interested in motion pictures?
2. How many motion picture theatres are there in that section?
3. How many managers have you visited? (This is not a check upon your activity; it is simply a basis for future actions, and also a means of keeping us from treading on each other's toes.)
4. Did you find them courteous, amenable to suggestion, willing to cooperate?
5. Please check any of the following that you have proposed to them:
 - a. Strict adherence to the law forbidding the admission of minors.
 - b. Saturday morning pictures fitted for children under 16.

- c. Different type of pictures for Saturday afternoon.
- d. Family program on Friday evening—something everyone can enjoy.
- e. Change of misleading and objectionable advertising.
- f. Special program of several short pictures for children during Christmas and other holiday weeks."

She reports that the theatre managers in most cases have been cooperative when approached about such plans as family programs, et cetera. Their problems of putting on at the best time the pictures that most people want is one she recognizes, and so when one exhibitor went so far as to say that he would show a family picture, even if they had to send it reel by reel from one house in the neighborhood to another in order to provide in both a suitable program, she was quite pleased.

Mrs. Tonsor emphasized the family program plan after Saturday morning programs for children were started, and it was seen that the good effect of selected programs was not a great enough attraction against Saturday morning lessons and household duties to continue them.

The obstacles which in her report she says must be overcome are the reluctance of the distribution managers, as well as that of the local managers; the financial consideration; the indifference and selfishness of parents; and finally the lack of support of the local clubs.

Since the latter two are dependent on the public, perhaps if they, through effort could be eliminated, then the others would disappear, for if the public truly shows it wishes a thing the exhibitors are anxious to respond and of course this takes care of the financial consideration of making family programs pay when they are put on.

Another indication of Mrs. Tonsor's interest is her membership on the Review Committee of the National Board of Review.

SOMETIMES we think whether or not better films work thrives in a community depends not so much upon cooperation, contacts, information, et cetera, but upon the zeal of the leader, be she president, chairman, or what, if this is present the other things are bound to come. The following glowing story from Mrs. Anna B. Somerville, who as Better Films Chairman of a D. A. R. chapter in Johnstown, Pa., brought to her whole community through this and her Civic Club interest, a valuable and informative column of motion picture material, is an example of what enthusiasm has accomplished. She writes:

"We are all capable of doing so much more than we do, and sometimes it requires only opportunity or the spur of necessity to awaken latent capabilities. The task we are asked to perform may seem very trivial, or it may loom forth as too huge, but if we put forth the effort and do our best in either event, ways and means do open up, and we find pleasure and benefit hitherto undreamed.

"When the writer was asked, four years ago, to act as local Better Films Chairman for Quemahoning Chapter (Johnstown, Pa.) D. A. R., she was perfectly at sea, having not the faintest idea what it was all about, or what on earth should be done. But, accepting with the desire to learn and do, many channels were soon discovered through which help and inspiration came flowingly. Helpful letters, filled with kindly thoughts and suggestions came from State and National Chairmen; previewed lists, together with other helpful literature, came from New York, and little by little the newly fledged Better Films Chairman began to see and learn that here was a chore that would be pleasurable as well as educational.

"The first step taken was to seek the co-operation of local theatre managers, acquainting them with Better Films work, and aiding them by helping 'boost' big, worthwhile films, such as *The King of Kings*, *Disraeli*, et cetera, the former drawing the largest crowds of any picture shown in our

city, before or since. A preview of this picture, invitations for which were sent out by the Chairman, for the benefit of the ministers and priests of the city and suburbs, aided materially in awakening the people's interest.

"But the greatest help throughout the four year term came from our local morning paper, the Johnstown Democrat, an unusually worthwhile publication that is known the world around and that has not once failed to publish our monthly Better Films articles noting the progress of the industry and carrying a list of approved pictures.

"The theatre advertisements in the local newspapers were carefully checked with the previewed lists and when a really 'good' film was scheduled we invariably mentioned it particularly in a boosting article published during the run of the picture.

"During the last year of the writer's term as Better Films Chairman, she was asked to act in a similar capacity for the Civic Club, and this work was combined, one article being published under the auspices of the D. A. R., and the next of the Civic Club. It was thought that one Better Films Chairman seemed to be sufficient for a small city such as ours.

"Arrangements were made with our local public library for the display of the previewed lists and the Motion Picture Magazine. The National Board of Review Magazine, giving true, helpful information concerning the progress of motion pictures, was also added to the library; the last named magazine being particularly helpful to anyone interested in Better Films work as it contains detailed accounts of the best high-grade pictures as well as previewed lists with clear, terse comment concerning each.

"The motion picture is here to remain and its scope is so broad that one can scarcely even glimpse what its ultimate future may be. It has taken some of our well beloved old stage stars a long time to realize the permanence of the screen, but one by one they are stepping before the camera and the 'mike' and giving to our hungry hearts again

their art and voice of days gone by. So that not only the present generation but those yet unborn may be delighted with their artistry. For it takes an artist to make a screen picture worth while, and more and more does the public clamor for the best.

"For, we are actors all, at heart,
And each day play our little part;
Emotions are akin to all,
Each but awaits the curtain call."

MANY of the civic organizations of Dover, Delaware, have for a long period of time desired a local association that would aid in the movement for the support of good films and this interest has now been crystallized in the formation of a county-wide organization, the Kent County Better Films Council.

The objects of this Council as stated in the Constitution are:

1. To encourage and promote clean, wholesome and better films.
2. To discourage salacious and unwholesome films.
3. To select, sponsor and promote programs especially for children.
4. To give accurate information in regard to the pictures, that the public may make an intelligent selection.

The Council is not composed of a few people but comprised of representatives of public spirited people of all civic, religious, educational and social organizations of the county. Mr. G. Park Weaver of the Capital Theatre management in Dover was quick to see the value of such a Council and is an active member of it. As a former Boy Scout leader he is particularly interested in the angle of the work dealing with children.

He had, even before the Council was organized, been interested in suitable programs for children in his theatre and had formed an association called "The Young Timers." This Young Timers organization while it is formed as one for good times

has an educational value as well. It is not at all the "kiddie klub" type. The organization includes young people from seven to fifteen in its membership but before membership is accepted the approval of parents and teachers is necessary and school work must be up to standard. Therefore it must be quite an honor to be a Young Timer.

Weekly matinees with programs of high merit are conducted. And parents are appealed to to cooperate with the theatre in sending their children to these special matinees. The theatre is glad to give these programs but if they are not supported of course the old method of any kind of a picture on Saturday will needs follow. This is a point careful parents can not overlook, for they know their youngsters are sure to go to the movies and so it is wise to see that they go to this particular program, for their children are benefitted by seeing a suitable picture and they are benefitting the Council by helping to make successful its plan of selected programs.

AT the first meeting of the season of the Northwest Child Welfare Club of Hartford, Conn., the topic, "Motion Pictures and Their Effect on the Child Mind," was discussed. Mrs. Helen F. McPherson, Hartford's new juvenile probation officer was the first speaker. Mrs. McPherson recently wrote the National Board of her interest in better films work and in the publications of the Board. She said in her talk that in the study of the prevention of juvenile delinquency this subject presented one phase of the problem. She took up her subject under three headings—first, what is the appeal of the movies?; second, to whom is the appeal of the movies?; and third, what kind of movies do children like and how may they be controlled? To the first her answer was that the appeal of the movies is very powerful, appealing to the senses of sight and hearing and making lasting impressions. In answer to the second ques-

tion it appears that with changing times children feel that it is their natural right to attend the movies as often as family supervision and finances will permit. All children enjoy movies, she said, and the extent to which they are influenced by them seems to depend on background, experience and training. Many juvenile delinquents, Mrs. MacPherson said, admit getting their ideas from the movies, but the average child, she believes likes laughter, movement and action and they are especially interested in western stories, but a general statement that movies are a good or bad influence, seems impossible to Mrs. MacPherson, as so much depends on the individual child. She continued her talk with an interesting account of work done among Hartford's juvenile delinquents showing how the aim is to get to the root of the trouble by inquiring into environment, physical conditions, spending of leisure time, by giving mental tests and procuring psychiatric aid. Her conclusion was that we can not ignore the movies but we can control them by a selective and discriminate choice.

John F. Pero, Jr., United States probation officer, continued the discussion referring to two schools of opinion, those who demand strict censorship and those who try in every way to promote better films. He spoke of the success in places where Saturday morning programs and family programs on certain nights were selected especially with the welfare of the child in mind. "With the movies," he continued, "the magic story book of the age, which modern science has given to the children, problems have arisen that challenge every group of people interested in the youth of our country." In his experience Mr. Pero finds that with children from homes where there is parental supervision or where children have other interests, such as scout work or similar programs, impressions made by the movies last only until some other form of recreational activity takes its place. Most children admit strong impressions but only those free to follow their own inclinations try to carry

out ideas of gangland which are depicted on the screen. Mr. Pero emphasized the fact that often parents, teachers, and leaders by a frank discussion with children of pictures seen can develop a wholesome attitude and a desire to see pictures of the better type.

MRS. LEON A. McINTIRE has contributed valuable service as Chairman of two Better Films Committees of the D. A. R. Society, the New Jersey State and the Eastern Division. So valuable in fact has been her work in these that she was appointed to the chairmanship of a special sub-committee of the National D. A. R. Better Films Committee, the Theatre Survey Committee. This Committee is carrying on a survey in certain sections of the country, from which it is hoped to report information as to the actual results of the work being done by the Better Films Committee, such as Community Groups or Committees, Family Week-end Programs, Junior Matinees, Friendly Contact with Local Theatre Managers, and Support of the Better Pictures. Any one particularly interested in this work is invited to communicate with Mrs. McIntire, at 246 Roseville Avenue, Newark, New Jersey.

Mrs. Richard R. Russel, National Chairman of the D. A. R. Better Films Committee, under whose leadership many excellent ideas have been carried out, has the following to say regarding this Committee in the D. A. R. Motion Picture Guide: "Each of these Daughters accomplished outstanding work in her community, during the past two years, and each will base her report on the co-operation obtained in her home town with theatre managers, and with other organizations. We hope to show that community interest can be directed against the demoralizing type of film; and that theatre managers will show a greater percentage of the better pictures when they find the community really wants clean entertainment. The responsibility rests partly with com-

munity leaders; producers probably could settle this matter at the source of supply, if they would; but since they have not done so, community leaders should help to create public sentiment against the wrong type of entertainment, and the D. A. R. should encourage the manager who tries to furnish clean entertainment by cooperating with him in every possible way."

Quite a number of plans for meetings and conferences including chapter, State and Division groups, have been arranged by Mrs. McIntire for the coming months so we expect to bring you further word from this source, including reports on the practical theatre survey plan.

(Continued from page 4)

more from Mrs. Maner in the future, but here, for the present, is the little story of junior matinee activity:

"Cognizant of the need of children for shoes in getting ready for school, the Better Films Council of Jacksonville sponsoring the Junior Matinees at the Florida Theatre offered admission to the theatre to each child bringing a pair of shoes for the poor. The response was ready and the great pile of shoes in the lobby of the theatre attested to the popularity of the matinees and the generosity of the patrons. The shoes were mended by shoe repair men and many kiddies will walk to school feeling pretty well shod. The Junior Matinees have been in charge of Mrs. E. B. Smith for many years. It was in Jacksonville that the Junior Matinee Movement was started in the South and the morning entertainment has been eminently successful. Fine prologues, given by amateur and professional talent, precede the feature picture which is also accompanied by a comedy. The matinees are well chaperoned and the children are well behaved and very happy. Parents feel that their children are secure and Jacksonville in general looks with pride and favor on the long line waiting admission to the Florida Theatre every Saturday morning."

"YES, we have junior matinees but where can we get pictures for them?" This is what we quite often hear. So we are glad to offer an answer to it with the information which has been given to us by Mr. John Hammell of the Paramount-Publix Corporation.

We asked him what pictures on our Junior Matinee List, compiled early in 1931, were still available, for older prints have such a bewildering way of getting suddenly out of circulation, and greatly to our pleasure he reported only three withdrawn. This means the following pictures and some others are still available: *The Blue Bird*, *Casey at the Bat*, *Eagle of the Sea*, *Feet First*, *Hold That Lion*, *The Kid Brother*, *Kit Carson*, *A Kiss for Cinderella*, *Light of the Western Stars*, *Little Women*, *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*, *Moana*, *Molly Make-Believe*, *Old Ironsides*, *Peter Pan*, *The Pony Express*, *The Quarterback*, *Redskin*, *Rough Riders*, *The Silent Enemy*, *Snow White*, *The Vanishing American*, *Wings*, and *Seven Swans*.

Of course, this does not mean, however, that prints are in all exchanges but your exhibitor can get the prints from the Film Library in Long Island, New York, if he will get in touch with Mr. Hammell of the home office of Paramount or if you book for your own junior matinees you can write directly to Mr. Hammell at Paramount-Publix Corporation, 1501 Broadway, New York City, who so graciously gave us this information and the expression of his willingness to help.

WE take this bit of space to regret lack of space, for we had many more stories both long and short of better films activities ready but when we came to place them, alas there was no room so we must hold them until the next issue. However, these include plans and ideas always good and useful so they will not be out of date, this is, we are glad to say, not a department of "latest fashions," then what would we do with overmatter—THE EDITOR.

Projection Room Jottings

By far the largest Committee of the National Board is the Review Committee. It has nearly three hundred members so that never do these members all get together at one time, they meet only in groups of 8 to 12 for review meetings in the projection room and in groups of a hundred for special discussion gatherings during the winter and so the secretaries being sort of go-betweens, seeing all of them at different times and knowing their interest in one another, thought a little department telling the rest of them about some of them would be appreciated and so from time to time it will be presented. And we believe that not only will this be of interest to review members but to our other readers who will thus gain from this new column some personal word about those who review pictures and upon whose judgments are based the reviews in the Selected Pictures Department.

THE National Board is glad to welcome back its members who have been vacationing, and we trust that they are as glad to return to their work of reviewing pictures as we are to have them. We miss some of our members who have moved away or who because of other activities have had to give up the work. We are, however, glad to welcome the many new members who have joined our ranks.

Mrs. M. R. Archibald will not be with us this winter as she has sailed for Europe to spend the winter in the South of France.

Mrs. Aida Nager has moved to Glastonbury, Conn., and will be unable to serve.

Mr. Glenn Snyder, who has been in the city for the summer, has returned to Lake George to resume his teaching activities. We are looking forward to seeing him at our annual luncheon.

Mrs. Francis Aymar has left town for the winter for parts unknown.

We miss the "Heavenly Twins," Mr. Charles Hein and Mr. Edward LeRoy Helms, who have gone to Philadelphia to

live. We trust they have not forgotten the Board and that they will return ere long.

Miss Dorothy Loose was married this summer and is now known as Mrs. Alexander L. Murphy, but she is still an active and interested member of the Board.

We are sorry to hear that Mrs. H. C. Quinby, one of the Board's charter members is ill, and we hope she will shortly return to health and the National Board.

The membership in the Junior Review Committee is increasing rapidly. We now have "Junior Reviewers" from New York University, Scudder School, Horace Mann School and several public schools in and around the city. These junior members bring a fresh point of view to the reviewing of pictures and we are glad to note that they possess a wealth of enthusiasm. The aspect of the projection room has changed with the advent of young people with their school books under their arms. They seem, however, to take the work seriously and are anxious to cooperate in every way they can.

The poor harassed secretaries of the Board wish to make a protest. Will the members try to be on time to review meetings, so that when the lights are out and the projection room is dark, members will not come stumbling in. Many of the projection rooms have raised steps and the secretaries grow old and gray worrying about the life and limbs of the members. There is a great deal of confusion and then suddenly a large head appears on the screen blocking out the picture while the belated member finds a chair. Of course the secretaries being only human are offenders, too, and also late at times which we realize holds up the meeting and works a hardship on the members.

Heard in the projection room the other day were groans of distress caused by a comedy, then a voice from a brave member who has seen many comedies made by the same company. "Mrs. Secretary, I think

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SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

EDITOR

JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIOUS INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. *Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).*

Mature audience. *Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).*

Junior matinee. *Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.*

**—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.*

THE AGE FOR LOVE—Written by Ernest Pascal, directed by Frank Lloyd, with Billie Dove, Lois Wilson, Edward Everett Horton and Charles Starrett. United Artists, 9 reels. A story of domestic troubles in which the people are unusually life-like but not very dramatic. The production and dialogue are good—the plot a bit wobbly and sometimes dull. Acting honors go to Edward Everett Horton. *Mature audience.*

***AMBASSADOR BILL**—Written by Guy Bolton, directed by Sam Taylor, with Will Rogers, Marguerite Churchill, Tad Alexander, Gustav von Seiffertitz, and Greta Nissen. Fox, 7 reels. An Oklahoma Yankee in a Balkan court—romantic comedy-melodrama with some of Will Rogers' saltiest satire. Well done and characteristically entertaining—one of Rogers' best. *Family audience.*

***ARE THESE OUR CHILDREN?**—Written and directed by Wesley Ruggles, with Eric Linden, Arline Judge, Ben Alexander, Rochelle Hudson and Beryl Mercer. RKO Radio, 10 reels. A kind of American tragedy, with a highly moral purpose that does not detract from its dramatic interest, attacking harmful environments for young people. It is vivid and compelling, though sometimes verging on the sentimental, and excellently acted and directed. Two new young players, Eric Linden and Arline Judge, give very promising performances. *Mature audience.*

THE BELOVED BACHELOR—Adapted from Edward Peple's play, directed by Lloyd Corrigan, with Paul Lukas, Dorothy Jordan and Charles Ruggles. Paramount, 8 reels. A light

and pleasing story of a bachelor who adopts a little girl, and in a very few years finds himself the adopted father of a very charming young lady. Charles Ruggles supplies some inebriation with his customary amusing skill. *Family audience.*

BRANDED MEN—Written and directed by Phil Rosen, starring Ken Maynard. Tiffany, 6 reels. Ken Maynard and his horse, Tarzan, carry on the tradition of Western romance in a tale that has to do with a trio of volunteer sheriffs—riding and shooting and the usual mild and perfunctory love interest. Ken and Tarzan are as likeable and exciting as ever. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

***THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV**—Adapted from Fyodor Dostoevsky's novel, directed by Fedor Ozep, with Fritz Kortner, Anna Sten and Fritz Rasp. Tobis-Forenfilms, 7 reels. This German production is a grim and powerful adaptation of certain episodes in the Russian masterpiece, centering about the eldest brother, Dmitri. Fritz Kortner is extraordinarily good, and Anna Sten and Fritz Rasp add memorable portraits. The direction is unusual in style. *Mature audience.*

CAPTIVATION—Written by Edgar Middleton, directed by John Harvel, with Conway Tearle and Betty Stockfeld. Capitol Film Exchange, 7 reels. An English light comedy made on the Riviera, not too well photographed but very well acted, with a charming heroine who is well worth seeing. Unsophisticated people will call the situations impossible, but those who enjoy clever comedy of the Noel Coward kind will find entertainment in it. *Mature audience.*

CONSOLATION MARRIAGE—Written by Bill Cunningham, directed by Paul Sloane, with a cast including Irene Dunn, Pat O'Brien and John Halliday. RKO Radio, 9 reels. Not strikingly original in plot but given individuality by its characters. Two young people, disappointed in love but trying to be sensible about it, marry—and their old loves come back again and things have to be adjusted. Lively dialogue, often verging on the whimsical, plenty of humor and tenderness without mush, and charmingly acted. *Mature audience.*

CORTE D'ASSISE (Before the Jury)—*Featuring Marcella Albani, Renzo Ricci and Carlo Ninchi. Transcontinental, 8 reels.* Well made and interesting picture with Italian dialogue and English sub-titles, showing, in dramatic form, how murder trials are conducted in Italy. *Mature audience.*

THE CUBAN LOVE SONG—*Written by C. Gardner Sullivan and Bess Meredyth, directed by W. S. van Dyke, with a cast including Lawrence Tibbett, Lupe Velez, Jimmy Durante, Karen Morley and Ernest Torrence. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 10 reels.* Lawrence Tibbett's voice and Jimmy Durante's refreshing brand of comedy lift this rather synthetic romance of a marine in Cuba into good entertainment. *Mature audience.*

THE DEAD LINE—*Written and directed by Lambert Hillyer, with a cast including Buck Jones and Loretta Sayers. Columbia, 6 reels.* One of the best talkies yet made by Buck Jones, who appears to be well qualified to fill the niche left vacant by Bill Hart. He is particularly good in this interesting and human picture of a quick-tempered man imprisoned for a crime he did not commit. *Family audience.*

FREIGHTERS OF DESTINY—*Written by Adele Buffington, directed by Fred Allen, with a cast including Tom Keene and Barbara Kent. Pathe, 6 reels.* George Duryea emerges under a new name—Tom Keene—as a new and promising star in this above the average Western story, which adds some good singing and fine photography to its dramatic interest. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

GRIEF STREET—*Written by Athur Hoerl, directed by Richard Thorpe, with Barbara Kent and John Holland in the cast. Chesterfield, 7 reels.* A murder mystery that really mystifies. The acting is not particularly proficient in the leading parts, but the production is good and the story holds the interest unusually well. *Family audience.*

HEARTBREAK—*Written by Llewellyn Hughes, directed by Alfred Werker, with a cast including Charles Farrell and Madge Evans. Fox, 6 reels.* A war story, well directed and acted, particularly effective in showing the devastation of war among those left behind at home. Charles Farrell is an American soldier who kills the brother of his Viennese sweetheart, ignorant of who he is, in an air battle. *Family audience.*

HEAVEN ON EARTH—*Adapted from Ben Lucien Burman's novel "Mississippi," directed by Russell Mack, with a cast including Lew Ayres, Anita Louise, and Elizabeth Patterson. Universal, 9 reels.* A long and rambling story of the Mississippi and a feud between steamboat people and shanty-boaters. Sometimes over-theatrical in production, but there are interesting bits of folk customs in the generally picturesque atmosphere, and Elizabeth Patterson gives a splendid characterization that is worth seeing. *Family audience.*

***THE MAD GENIUS**—*Written by J. G. Alexander and Harvey Thew, directed by Michael Curtiz, with a cast including John Barrymore, Marian Marsh, Donald Cook and Charles Butterworth. Warner Bros., 8 reels.* A gripping story in which John Barrymore gives one of his skillful characterizations in a part not unlike Svengali—a man prevented by a deformity from being the great dancer of his ambition, adopts a waif to realize his own frustrated dreams. *Mature audience.*

THE MEN IN HER LIFE—*Adapted from the novel by Warner Fabian, directed by William Beaudine, with a cast including Lois Moran, Charles Bickford and Victor Varconi. Columbia, 8 reels.* Amusing entertainment which concerns the polishing of a tough ex-gangster by a charming society girl. In the end it gets into a complication of blackmail, murder and sacrifice that is melodramatic and rather ordinary. The acting and production are good. *Mature audience.*

MORALS FOR WOMEN—*Written by Francis Hyland, directed by Mort Blumenstock, with a cast including Bessie Love, Conway Tearle and Emma Dunn. Tiffany, 7 reels.* A story of the "cared-for ladies" type, which only needed a Constance Bennett to be a great attraction to those who like this kind of picture. It is well up to the average of its sort, with Bessie Love doing good acting in a part unlike her usual type. *Mature audience.*

***LE MYSTERE DE LA CHAMBRE JAUNE** (The Mystery of the Yellow Room)—*Adapted from Gaston Leroux's novel, directed by Marcel L'Herber, with a cast including Roland Toutain and Huguette ex-Duflos. Osso, 10 reels.* An excellent French production of Leroux's famous detective story, with all the proper thrills and chills. A fair knowledge of French is needed to follow the plot. Good entertainment, which incidentally gives a good exhibition of French customs, and the young man who solves the mystery is an unusually engaging hero. *Family audience.*

THE ONE WAY TRAIL—*Written by Claude Rister, directed by Ray Taylor, starring Tim McCoy. Columbia, 6 reels.* An interesting Western, made of familiar ingredients, to which Tim McCoy adds something novel in his particular brand of charm and humanness. *Family audience.*

PLATINUM BLONDE—*Written by Harry E. Chandler and Douglas Churchill, directed by Frank R. Capra. Columbia, 9 reels.* A lively comedy concerning a society girl who tried to tame a temperamental roughneck reporter by marrying him. Jean Harlow is hardly convincing as one of the old New York aristocracy, but the picture is gay and entertaining, in its implausible way, with some bright dialogue. *Mature audience.*

THE ROAD TO RENO—*Written by Virginia Kellogg, directed by Richard Wallace, with a cast including Lilyan Tashman, Charles Rogers, Irving Pichel and Peggy Shannon. Paramount,*

8 reels. A story of Reno divorces, and how a woman's love of frivolity brings tragedy to her family. *Mature audience.*

THE RULING VOICE—Written by Rowland and Donald Lee, directed by Rowland V. Lee, with a cast including Walter Huston, Dudley Digges, Doris Kenyon, Loretta Young, David Manners and John Halliday. First National, 7 reels. One of the Public Peril dramas, an attempt to compromise between a strong attack on racketeering and a fiction love story. The result is synthetic—the two elements do not blend successfully. Good acting, with one of Dudley Digges' incomparable performances. *Mature audience.*

SECRET SERVICE—Adapted from William Gillette's play, directed by J. Walter Rubin, with a cast including Richard Dix, Shirley Grey and Gavin Gordon. RKO Radio, 7 reels. The famous romantic spy-drama of the Civil War—a relic of former days that makes a picture of the ordinary melodramatic sort, with Richard Dix acting in his usual manner. *Family audience.*

***THE SIN OF MADELON CLAUDET**—Adapted from Edward Knoblock's play, "Lullaby," directed by Edgar Selwyn, with a cast including Helen Hayes, Jean Hersholt, Lewis Stone, Marie Prevost and Robert Young. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels. A deliberate sob story of the Madame X order, in which Helen Hayes makes her screen debut with such splendid artistry that she keeps the story of maternal devotion and sacrifice sincere and moving with no lapses into maudlin sentimentality. The cast is also good. *Mature audience.*

THE SPORTING CHANCE—Written by King Baggott, directed by Albert Herman, with a cast including William Collier, Jr., Claudia Dell and James Hall. Peerless, 7 reels. A jockey story, with plenty of obviousness in its plot, but some good horse racing and incidental entertainment episodes. *Family audience.*

SUSAN LENOX, HER FALL AND RISE—Adapted from David Graham Phillips' novel, directed by Robert Z. Leonard, with a cast including Greta Garbo, Clark Gable, Jean Hersholt and Hale Hamilton. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels. Greta Garbo gives distinction to a screen version of this novel that has many popular qualities but little that is distinguished in itself. *Mature audience.*

THE TIP-OFF—Written by George Kibbe Turner, directed by Albert Rogell, with a cast including Eddie Quillan, Robert Armstrong, Ginger Rogers and Joan Peers. RKO Pathe, 7 reels. An amusing comedy drama, with occasional lapses, about the friendship between an agreeable fresh youngster who repairs radios and a dumb prize-fighter. There is a slight gangster element, not too seriously treated, and several good characterizations. *Family audience.*

***WAY BACK HOME**—Written by Jane Murfin, directed by William Seiter, with a cast headed by Phillips Lord. RKO Radio, 9 reels. A story of the joys and sorrows of simple, honest

small-town folks, in which Phillips Lord brings to the screen his famous radio characterization of Seth Parker. Humor, sentiment and fine acting make it a thoroughly enjoyable picture. *Family audience.*

THE YELLOW TICKET—Adapted from Michael Morton's play, directed by Raoul Walsh, with a cast including Elissa Landi, Lionel Barrymore and Laurence Olivier. Fox, 8 reels. Melodrama of czarist Russia, done with up-to-date competence and effectiveness. It is a story of persecuted innocence and the eventual triumph of virtue, with just the right kind of acting by the three leading players. *Mature audience.*

SHORT SUBJECTS

ACROSS THE SEA—Educational, 1 reel. Interesting color travelogue of Hawaii. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

ATHLETIC DAZE—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1 reel. Evolution of various sports from the middle of the last century until the present time. *Family audience.*

BARNYARD BROADCAST (Mickey Mouse Cartoon)—Columbia, 1 reel. Mickey running a broadcasting station. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BARS AND STRIPES (Krazy Kat Cartoon)—Columbia, 1 reel. An amusing battle between a huge band of musical instruments and Krazy Kat. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BATTLING WITH BUFFALO BILL (Serial)—Universal, 12 episodes. Thrilling serial for juvenile entertainment. The plot concerns a man, his daughter and a young companion and their troubles in keeping a gold mine. Indians, out-laws and all that go with a wild Western. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BEAU HUNKS—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 4 reels. Laurel and Hardy join the Foreign Legion—"to forget." Funny in the typical fashion of these comedies. *Family audience.*

BELIEVE IT OR NOT NO. 2—Vitaphone, 1 reel. Another collection of Ripley's strange facts—this one includes a 308 year old Japanese man, the walking fish of Java, and a house built of cards. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE BIG SCOOP—RKO-Pathe, 2 reels. An amusing comedy of a newspaper reporter who has decided to give up his job and stay with his family but going after a scoop is in his blood. *Family audience.*

BIRDS OF THE SEA (Magic Carpet Series)—Fox, 1 reel. Interesting and amusing scenes of sea birds. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE BLACK SPIDER (Terrytoons)—Educational, 1 reel. Clever burlesque of the creepy-horror kind of melodrama. *Family audience.*

BLONDE PRESSURE—Columbia, 1 reel. Eddie Buzzell tells the grown-ups another bed-time

story, this one burlesquing football pictures. For those who do not dislike wise-cracks and puns. *Mature audience.*

BOSKO'S SODA FOUNTAIN (Looney Tunes)—*Vitaphone, 1 reel.* Amusing cartoon. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

CINNAMON—*Tiffany, 2 reels.* The Tiffany "Chimps" in an amusing burlesque of "Cimarron." *Family audience.*

THE CLOCK SHOP (Silly Symphony)—*Columbia, 1 reel.* An amusing novelty. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

CURIOSITIES NOS. 227 and 228—*Columbia, 1 reel each.* The usual thing, all right for fillers if one does not mind the attempts at smart humor by the man who does the talking. *Family audience.*

DECEPTION PLAYS—*Tiffany, 1 reel.* Coaches from various universities explain deception plays in football. *Family audience.*

DEVELOPING A FOOTBALL TEAM—*Universal, 1 reel.* "Pop" Warner showing the training of a squad. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

DIVE IN—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1 reel.* Exhibition diving by U. S. champions. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE DOG SNATCHER (Scrappy Cartoon)—*Columbia, 1 reel.* A Scrappy cartoon that is better than the previous ones, owing an obvious debt to "Skippy." *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

DOGS IS DOGS—*Our Rascals, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels.* The Rascals in an old-fashioned sort of story about down-trodden step-children and their eventual happiness. The children and the animals are quite good. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

FAIRYLAND FOLLIES (Aesop Fable)—*RKO-Pathe, 1 reel.* Mother Goose keeps school for all of the children of the Mother Goose Rhymes. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE FAMILY SHOE (Aesop Fable)—*RKO-Pathe, 1 reel.* Cartoon about the old woman who lived in the shoe and Jack and the Beanstalk. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

HAPPY DAYS IN THE TYROL (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox, 1 reel.* The peasants of the Tyrol dance and yodel. *Family audience.*

THE HOMELAND OF THE DANES (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox, 1 reel.* Playtime in Denmark. *Family audience.*

THE HOUSE DICK—*RKO-Radio, 2 reels.* Jimmie Savo accidentally becomes a house detective in a hotel. *Family audience.*

IN THE SOUTH SEAS (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox, 1 reel.* Life in Hawaii, Fiji and Polynesia. *Family audience.*

IN WONDERLAND (Oswald Cartoon)—*Universal, 1 reel.* In a new version of Jack and the Beanstalk, Oswald saves the old homestead. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

JAIL BIRDS (Cartoon)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1 reel.* Amusing cartoon of Flip the Frog. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

JINGLE BELLS—*Educational, 1 reel.* An amusing cartoon. *Family audience.*

JUNGLE JAM (Tom and Jerry Cartoon)—*RKO-Radio, 1 reel.* Very good cartoon. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE KINGDOM OF SHEBA (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox, 1 reel.* Industries and amusements of Ethiopia. *Family audience.*

KITTY FROM KANSAS CITY (Bouncing Ball Cartoon)—*Paramount, 1 reel.* Comedy song number with Rudy Vallee singing. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE LAND OF THE NILE (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox, 1 reel.* Fine scenic of Egypt. *Family audience.*

LAUGHING WITH MEDBURY IN DEATH VALLEY (Travelaugh Series)—*Columbia, 1 reel.* This one of the series better than usual. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE MELON DRAMA—*RKO-Radio, 2 reels.* Clark and McCullough as private detectives—funny in their own particular way. *Family audience.*

MONKEY DOODLES—*Columbia, 1 reel.* Jocke and his Gang which includes monkeys, dogs and parrots in an amusing hodge-podge of adventures. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE MYSTERY OF COMPARTMENT C (True Detective Stories Series)—*RKO-Radio, 2 reels.* Another of the true stories from the experiences of Nick Harris. Better than the usual short film of this type, in the manner of the better class of serials. *Family audience.*

THE NEWS HOUND—*RKO-Pathe, 2 reels.* An amusing comedy of a cub reporter's efforts to make good. *Family audience.*

OLYMPIC EVENTS—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1 reel.* Some of the probable contenders in the coming Olympic games. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

OUTPOSTS OF THE FOREIGN LEGION (Romantic Journeys Series)—*Educational, 1 reel.* Fine views of distant legion posts in Northern Africa, showing the people and their customs, in color. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PACK AND SADDLE (Spotlight Series)—*RKO-Pathe, 1 reel.* Showing the boys of the Valley Ranch in Wyoming riding through the beautiful country, shooting moose, et cetera. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE PAGEANT OF SIAM (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 *reel*. Royal celebrations in Siam. *Family audience*.

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 3—*Paramount* 1 *reel*. Wild animals at the water hole, et cetera. *Family audience. Junior matinee*.

PARIS OF THE ORIENT (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 *reel*. Busy life in Saigon, French Indo-China. *Family audience*.

PATHE REVIEW NO. 4—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 *reel*. The Moors of Venice—the doves and bells of St. Marks—a baby looks at things through grandma's spectacles, et cetera. *Family audience*.

A PEASANT'S PARADISE—*Educational*, 1 *reel*. Colored travelogue of Bavaria and the yodeling peasants. *Family audience. Junior matinee*.

PENALTIES (Football for the Fan Series)—*Tiffany*, 1 *reel*. Very interesting film showing in slow motion illegal tackling. *Family audience. Junior matinee*.

QUEENIE OF HOLLYWOOD—*Educational*, 2 *reels*. Three girls and a dog in Hollywood, and how Queenie, the dog, helped the girls to prosperity. Amusing. *Family audience*.

*RIDERS OF RILEY (Sportlight Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 *reel*. A marvelous picture taken at Fort Riley showing the splendid horsemanship of the U. S. Cavalry. One of the best "Sportlights" ever produced. *Family audience. Junior matinee*.

THE ROAD TO MANDALAY—*Vitaphone*, 1 *reel*. Interesting travelogue. *Family audience*.

RUNNING HOLLYWOOD—*Universal*, 2 *reels*. Hollywood is turned over to the motion picture stars to run while the mayor is away. Many stars appear in the picture and it is interesting for that reason although the story is silly. *Family audience. Junior matinee*.

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 12 (Series No. 1)
SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 1 (Series No. 2)
—*Columbia*, 1 *reel*. Various Hollywood events in which screen celebrities take part. *Family audience*.

SHARKS AND SWORDFISH—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 *reel*. Catching dangerous water creatures in the Pacific, picturesque and exciting. *Family audience. Junior matinee*.

SHOVE OFF—*George K. Arthur, Paramount*, 2 *reels*. A comedy of a youth who goes to a fancy dress ball as a sailor and is inadvertently taken into the navy. Plenty of fun. *Family audience. Junior matinee*.

SKIMPY—*Tiffany*, 2 *reels*. The Tiffany "Chimps" in a burlesque of "Skippy." Perhaps more interesting to children than "Skippy" itself. *Family audience. Junior matinee*.

SMART WORK—*Educational*, 1 *reel*. A short comedy with a really comic idea. *Family audience*.

THE SONG OF THE VOODOO (Vagabond Adventures Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 *reel*. One of the best of this series. These pictures avoid the silliness that so often goes with films of this sort. *Family audience. Junior matinee*.

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY (Silly Symphony)—*Columbia*, 1 *reel*. A very amusing cartoon. *Family audience. Junior matinee*.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 14—*Universal*, 1 *reel*. Strange things that occur all over the world such as elephants husking cocoanuts—et cetera. *Family audience. Junior matinee*.

THROUGH THE AGES (Vagabond Adventures Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 *reel*. Mexico—the country's customs, and their pottery that has been buried for generations. *Family audience. Junior matinee*.

TORCHY PASSES THE BUCK—*Educational*, 2 *reels*. Ray Cooke is an engaging Torchy and the comedy is lively and likeable. *Family audience*.

VOICE OF HOLLYWOOD NO. 8557—*Tiffany*, 1 *reel*. One of the best of this series—all of its items are interesting to fans including a tango by Rudolph Valentino and Gloria Swanson. *Family audience*.

THE WALL STREET MYSTERY—*Vitaphone*, 2 *reels*. A murder story. *Mature audience*.

WHEN GEISHA GIRLS GET GAY (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 *reel*. The geisha girls of Japan go modern. *Family audience*.

WRESTLING SWORDFISH—*Educational*, 1 *reel*. Interesting pictures of fishing. *Family audience*.

(Continued from page 18)

this comedy is so much better than the average run of comedies that it should be selected." After all most things are judged, good or bad by comparison. A word to the wise is sufficient. Let us be open-minded about comedies and remember that they also have place on the program for the masses.

A few answers out of the dark to daily questions:

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"No, I am sorry we can't have any more air."

"Yes, if a picture is marked for 'junior matinee' it must be selected."

"If you mark a picture 'good entertainment' it is automatically selected."

Since the companies make silly comedies there must be a demand for them."

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To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE



Vol. VI, No. 10



December, 1931



*Douglas Fairbanks in his entertaining travel picture,
"Around the World in Eighty Minutes" (see page 8)*

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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Macon's Matinee Mentor

THE radio broadcasts now and then, in a series, tributes to different cities calling attention particularly to their special historical background, their leading

industries and their outstanding accomplishments so we will take a pattern from them and broadcast here through the Who's Who Department of our Magazine the story of a city's noted activity in presenting to you the leader of that activity—Mrs. Piercy Chestney of Macon, Georgia. We have always felt that Macon and Matinees were synonymous words so immediately does the latter come to our mind at the mention of the former. But there would not be this connection were it not for the enthusiasm and long continued

interest of Mrs. Chestney, the originator and leader of these matinees. So if we think of matinees in connection with the city we must also think of them in connection

with Mrs. Chestney for her part in them.

When we wrote to her as a member of our Better Films National Council to tell us about herself she instead told us about her

matinees so we will through this interest introduce her to you, by quoting parts from the material she sent us. "For ten years, before the organization of our Committee, I worked for children's matinees in Macon, along with a few other interested people and naturally I was vitally interested when on August 29th, 1923, our Committee was organized, as I knew matinees were assured. The first was held the following Saturday and they have continued without interruption with two exceptions—one Saturday which fell on Christ-



Mrs. Piercy Chestney

mas, and November of this year when an economic situation in the Macon theatres made it seem wise to discontinue them for a month. However, a month's rest appears

to have only whetted the appetite of the children for them as on December 5th, we had 1,500 in the house, turned away 200 and received for the Organized Service, Hepsibah Orphanage and the Red Cross over 3,000 garments." One reason for the return of these matinees in spite of a temporary drawback is noteworthy as reported by Mrs. Chestney, "When the matinees were discontinued 41 organizations in the city—men's and women's—wrote to the owner of the theatres expressing their regret at the discontinuance and requesting a reinstatement of the matinees under the auspices of the Better Films Committee with the matinees to be conducted by the Committee in exactly the same way as before. All of which shows the city-wide interest in the matinees and the marvelous cooperation the Committee has from men and women in all walks of life."

"We have practically every one of the charter members still in active membership in our Committee. Our membership now numbers 75, with the Mayor an ex-officio member, and the Chief of Police on the Advisory Committee. It is representative of practically every organization in the city, both men's and women's."

"The thematic program for children's matinees, that is every program, every week, built around some definite idea was originated by us. It has been adopted by chains of theatres and national organizations, which through their units sponsor matinees." This we well know for we have answered numerous enquirers from all over the country regarding the special type of related matinee program by referring them to Mrs. Chestney or by sending them copies of the Macon Schedules with which we were generously provided by the Committee.

"In June of this year we began broadcasting over the local station—WMAZ. The broadcasts are given every Monday morning from 10:15 to 10:30. The first part of the program is devoted to pictures in general, studio happenings, color, music, et cetera, and the latter part to the pictures appearing

on the local screens, enlarging upon those we can recommend and merely mentioning the audience suitability of those we can not recommend." The material prepared by Mrs. Chestney is read by a different member of the Committee each week.

We regret that Mrs. Chestney would not herself write the story about herself and the Macon matinees for she is a writer professionally, a member of the Macon Writers Club and has livened many of the pages of the Macon Telegraph with her writing. For several years she wrote a two-column department "Film Facts and Fancies by Fannie Fairtall." For ten years she conducted a column under the name of "Miss Gadda Boute" in which was fully reported her reactions to the four Annual Conferences of the National Board which she has attended in New York City, as a representative of her Committee.

Mrs. Chestney has written a number of historical pageants which have been sold and produced in many places in many states. Her pageants are often interesting contributions to the matinee programs, as the following example of a thematic program shows:

First United States Flag Raised (January 1, 1776). (1) Community Singing.

(2) Serial—*The Indians Are Coming*.

(3) Prologue—Short Pageant presenting replica of first flag raised.

(4) Feature—*The Social Lion*.

Mrs. Chestney's newspaper work has been responsible for a special recognition coming to her which is closely in line with her matinee work. That is a life membership in the Georgia Congress of Parents and Teachers, an honor conferred upon her by the Sixth District as an evidence of what they considered the Macon Telegraph Parent-Teacher Page had done for the P.-T. A. work in the district and the place it has given the district in the State. This page was instituted by Mrs. Chestney and has been edited by her since December 4th, 1921.

So although Mrs. Chestney has many interests they are all related to her "hobby," shall we say, of better films and matinees.

An English Argument for Junior Matinees

COMPTON MACKENZIE, the Scottish Nationalist and well-known novelist, has some pointed observations in the London Evening Standard on the movies and their influence on children which have been reported by the New York Evening Post Foreign Service. Mr. Mackenzie calls the cinema the universal narcotic, and says it should be forbidden children under the age of sixteen. The reasons for this are that the cinema destroys the capacity for wonder, cheapens womanhood, destroys imagination, and by causing children to suppose that life itself unrolls as easily as a film, is responsible for "the indolence which permeates the whole nation."

Only one film in two hundred is fit for children, Mr. Mackenzie declares, and, such being the case, "there is only one way to keep children uncontaminated by the cinema, and that is to forbid them to enter the cinema except on holidays when a special program should be presented."

"We have rightly made the employment of child labor impossible, but I do not hesitate to say that to give children the freedom of the cinema is as great a crime against youth as to send children into cotton mills and coal mines. We have made a law forbidding children under a certain age to smoke. We have raised the age of consent. Then why, with all this tenderness for youthful morals, do we encourage children to encounter the worst side of life on the film before they encounter it directly?"

Mr. Mackenzie, anxious lest he be considered a kill-joy, concludes that "so far am I from wishing to kill joy that my main objection to the films is their tendency to kill the joy of children. They offer to the young ugliness, vulgarity and luxurious success; but, worst of all, they scabble upon the youthful mind their false experience whereby the youthful mind is blurred and prematurely aged.

"That there are good films, and beautiful

films, and true films, goes without saying, but goodness, beauty and truth are the exception, and that they can exist in the cinema is the most powerful argument for offering only such films to the eyes and ears of the young."

We entirely agree with Mr. Mackenzie in his approval of junior matinees and we advocate as another means of supplying suitable programs for children, especially the older children, the family week-end programs. While every one knows that the motion picture is not made with the child audience in mind still there are certain pictures suitable for showing to children. We felt like questioning Mr. Mackenzie's statement "that only one film in two hundred is fit for children" but before doing so decided to check up on some of our classifications. We find that our Review Committees for the ten months, January first to November first, reviewed four hundred and eighty feature pictures, two hundred and ninety-five of these were selected or recommended, of these "selected" pictures one hundred and fifty-eight were rated for the mature audience and one hundred and thirty-seven for the family audience, with thirty-four of these latter rated as acceptable for junior matinee showing. This indicates from our Review Committee's recommendations that thirty-four pictures out of four hundred and eighty or about seven in a hundred were considered fit for children. Looking at it this way it is rather encouraging to know that there were thirty-four films suitable for junior matinees and one hundred and fifty-eight suitable for family showings during this time, for this supplies quite as much motion picture fare as necessary in choosing for children in ten months but looking at the figures from the other angle they offer a spur to those interested, to concentrate on a plan of making certain that the children see these pictures and not the three hundred and twenty-five unsuitable ones.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional* and *Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

SECRETARY AND EDITOR

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Best Pictures of the Year

FEW films in any single year turn out to be memorable for their advancement of the art of the motion picture. The National Board of Review's list of the ten best is based on a consideration of what films have contained some unusual quality that is purely cinematic. A supplementary list is added of films that without any special artistic pre-eminence are nevertheless successful, and, in some respect, important pieces of motion picture making. The list of foreign films selected are all important and unusual contributions to the screen. These selections were all made from films reviewed by the National Board of Review between December 1, 1930 and December 1, 1931.

TEN BEST

Cimarron

City Lights

City Streets

Dishonored

Front Page, The

Guardaman, The

Quick Millions

Rango

Surrender

Tabu

SUPPLEMENTARY TEN

Around the World in

Eighty Minutes

Bad Girl

Champ, The

Little Caesar

Public Enemy, The

Sin of Madelon Claudet, The

Skippy

Smiling Lieutenant, The

Street Scene

Trader Horn

FOREIGN

Die Dreigroschenoper (The Beggar's Opera)

Das Lied vom Leben (The Song of Life)

Le Million (The Million)

Sous les Toits de Paris

(Under the Roofs of Paris)

Vier von der Infanterie (Comrades of 1918)

Surrender

Adapted by S. N. Behrman and Sonya Levien from Pierre Benoit's "Axelle," directed by William K. Howard, photographed by James Wong Howe, produced and distributed by Fox.

The Cast

<i>Dumaine</i>	.....	Warner Baxter
<i>Axelle</i>	.....	Leila Hyams
<i>Captain Ebling</i>	.....	Ralph Bellamy
<i>Wietrich</i>	.....	Alexander Kirkland
<i>Count Reichendorf</i>	.....	C. Aubrey Smith
<i>Goulot</i>	.....	William Powley
<i>Dominica</i>	.....	Bodil Rosing

PEOPLE who watch directors rather than stars will naturally be on the lookout for *Surrender*—ever since *White Gold* William K. Howard has been known as a man in whose pictures there was more than an even chance of finding something above the average. Just what he needs to put him unquestionably among the masters of the cinema is hard to say—perhaps it is the strong masterly hand, that can dominate stories and actors whoever and whatever they happen to be and create a masterpiece out of whatever material comes to it. At any rate, stories and actors in his pictures have not generally been impressive enough to let him shine with the brilliance that he often seems to deserve.

There was *Transatlantic* a little while ago, which undeniably showed cinematic skill of a surpassing kind that created vivid and exciting movement on the screen, movement that was a pleasure to watch; but it was not enough to create the illusion of depth



The old German kitchen in "Surrender" where the Countess first meets the French prisoner

in superficial actors or of importance in a trivial story.

Here in *Surrender* Mr. Howard has better luck. He has a better story, though its originality is not going to dazzle anyone, and he has some characters to work with which in the persons of effective actors give the story substance and significance.

The story deals with the old theme of the futility and waste of war. There is no fighting in it: all the action happens in an old German castle far from the battle front, and in a prisoners-of-war camp near by. There is a lovely German countess and a French prisoner who fall in love, and in the end fall into the conventional fade-out embrace, but their love is not a very thrilling affair nor are they as individuals anything more than good-looking movie actors engaged in trying to supply conventional box-office appeal according to formula.

The interesting people are three men, all of them Germans: the captain in charge of the prisoners, whom the war has so mutilated that life without war has no place for him; an old count, living in the imperial glories of the past, his life breath the smoke of forgotten battles, talking heroics and playing games with toy soldiers, and the last of his four grandsons, an idealist whose ideals have all been shot away.

The drama is apparently supposed to lie in the conflict between love and patriotism, with occasional enlivenment provided by attempts of the prisoners to escape. Unfortunately this conflict never seems important: Mr. Baxter and Miss Hyams, pleasant though they are—and oh, so consistently clean and unruffled in make-up and costume!—never show any gripping feeling, and one never has any doubt that their little romance will go the usual movie way and finish with

a happy kiss. The prisoners, also, fail to supply much intensity: they give no illusion of being anything but minor Hollywood players hired to move about as bidden and utter some rather unhappy attempts at comedy relief.

The real drama is hardly a conflict at all—we merely watch their doom working itself out on three men whose souls, and even their chance to snatch a bit of contentment out of life, have been destroyed by war. The two younger men protest, one with bitter egotism, the other with bitter philosophy, and the old count dodders about in gruff and senile ignorance of what has happened to him. But they are hopeless victims from the start, so in the grip of the monster that they cannot even fight him.

This, the significant part of the story, is given splendid effect by three fine pieces of acting. Ralph Bellamy, visually and vocally, makes the captain with the ruined face and artificial arm a figure not easy to forget—Alexander Kirkwood gives depth and eloquence to the young artist torn from his music to be a soldier, escaping the easy pitfall of being either heavy or maudlin or both by an overlying quality of lightness that might almost be called charm—C. Aubrey Smith manages by sheer good playing to cloak the old general with a pitiful dignity and tragic pathos.

Mr. Howard, in his direction, has done nobly by the good parts of his story and by his good actors. The "movie" parts, and the "movie" actors, he has been unable to make seem anything but just what they are. But most of all he has used camera and sound with a technical skill that is exceptional. Always, with the help of an excellent cameraman, he keeps things beautiful for the eyes, sometimes making a composition of moving light and shadow that is startling in its combination of beauty and meaning. The sound—the rise and fall and silence of the music, the management of dialogue—adds, as not many directors know how to make it add, to the emotion of the

picture without interfering with its motion as a picture.

For these technical reasons alone *Surrender* is one of the most admirable things that have come out of an American studio this year.

Around the World in Eighty Minutes

Directed by Victor Fleming and Douglas Fairbanks, with dialogue by Robert E. Sherwood, photographed by Henry Sharp and Chuck Lewis, released and distributed by United Artists.

DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS, whether masquerading under the name of D'Artagnan or Robin Hood or Zorro, has always been irrepressibly Douglas Fairbanks, and here at last he drops all pretense of disguise and goes adventuring without benefit of Dumas or any other plot contriver. The result is something verging on the unique in many ways. And lively entertainment. If, as someone has hinted, it is not so much Douglas Fairbanks seeing the world as Douglas Fairbanks letting the world see him, it is still lively entertainment.

Doug, with Victor Fleming and a couple of cameramen and a load of apparatus, set out from Hollywood for the Orient. Hawaii, the Philippines, Japan, China, India—they all have a look at Doug, and the camera looks at the look and preserves it for the edification and amusement of the Western World. Probably no king or emperor would be given readier access to things he wanted to get at than this Hollywood star whose smile and acrobatics have gone into every corner of the earth, hence many things that an ordinary travelogue would have to do without are to be found in this picture. The ordinary things, moreover, are given a personal flavor by the Fairbanks participation in them, so that whether you see him in action or hear him explaining you always have the Fairbanks personality coloring what you are looking at. Your enjoyment of it

will depend on how much the Fairbanks personality pleases you.

Only a rigid resentment against this personal flavoring can spoil the interest and gaiety that the film provides. Almost all the incidents chosen are worth looking at, and there is a plentiful sprinkling of fantasy and humor and even genial satire that create something novel in screen entertainment.

All sorts of people and things serve as Mr. Fairbanks' supporting cast—potentates, swimmers, dancers, white elephants, tigers and corpses. And Victor Fleming must not be forgotten, who gives a most competent impersonation of Victor Fleming.

"Celluloid—The Film To-day"

By PAUL ROTH

Reviewed by James Shelley Hamilton

THIS book is a supplement to the same author's "The Film Up To Now," and in it Mr. Roth has collected various opinions and pronouncements on the motion picture as represented by the output of the last year. He discusses the attitude of producers toward their product, which includes the influence of the business of film-making on the art of the cinema; the development of dialogue, toward which Mr. Roth feels more kindly than when he wrote his last book; the present state of the American and the British film; the use of propaganda in films, and its effect, the question of the educational film, and the Repertory Film Movement—which is another name for what we know as the Little Theatre Movement. Finally he reviews in detail several of the year's outstanding pictures, and adds a couple of essays on Zola and the similarity of his methods to those of a scenario writer, and on the films of Fritz Lang.

The book's chief value—and that is no small one—is that it contains a lot of data, of the year-book kind, about important films—credits, a suggestion of casts, et cetera. This data is not always correct, but it is the best to be found in such convenient form. Mr. Roth's critical opinions fall somewhere above the average film reviewer's and below those of the really creative critic—if such there be in the realm of the motion picture. Mr. Roth is dissatisfied with the general run of films and eager for something better: just what he hopes for is not quite clear, perhaps because he does not know. But he has written another book that definitely belongs in any library specializing in the literature of the motion picture.

Longmans, Green and Co., Publishers. Price, \$3 00

us are: *Tabu*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Alexander Hamilton* and *The Dreyfus Case*. If you wish samples of these book-marks we will be glad to send them to you.

BULLETIN

THIS MONTH Honorable Mention

*Around the World in
Eighty Minutes
Surrender*

PREVIOUS MONTHS 1931

Exceptional

*The Bengar's Opera
Cimarron
City Lights
Comrades of 1918
Das Lied vom Leben
Le Million
Rango
Sous les Toits de Paris
Tabu
Trader Horn*

BULLETIN

Honorable Mention

*Bad Girl
The Blue Angel
Cain and Artem
City Streets
A Connecticut
Yankee
Dishonored
East Lynne
Father's Son
The Front Page
The Guardsman
The Public Enemy
Quick Millions
Romance Sentimentale
Skippy
Street Scene
Ten Cents a Dance*

SOME of the more recent films to which the American Library Association has given its endorsement are: *Alexander Hamilton*, *Devotion*, *Twenty-Four Hours*, *Over the Hill*, *Juvenile Court*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Around the World in Eighty Minutes with Douglas Fairbanks*, and *I Am From Siam*. Thinking of book-film connections there is no better tie-up interest for Better Films Committees, libraries and theatres than that of book-marks. They are bright and colorful for the season and might be slipped into Christmas books. The Cleveland Public Library has always been a leader in this field and some of the book lists compiled by that Library and presented in book-mark form, Miss Marilla W. Freeman, librarian of the Main Library, tells

"Over the Hill" Reviewed by the Juniors

JUNIOR Review Committee members and other young people, prospective members, were invited to attend the review of the Fox film, *Over the Hill*, arranged for the National Board in the Fox Private Theatre shortly before its release. The judgments on the picture, as is found to be the case generally with these keen young junior reviewers, were clear, normal, discerning and well stated.

Several of those present were called upon to do more than record their impressions of the picture upon the ballots for the National Board, they were reviewing with a double purpose. Perhaps it will be interesting to our readers to hear something of the use to which the results of this meeting were put by some of the young people.

One young man is on the staff of The Jersey Journal Club Magazine, a weekly paper published by and for young people as a supplement to the Jersey City (N. J.) Journal by two club groups, the Junior Club of members from 6 to 16 years, and the Senior Club of those over 16.

The following paragraphs are quoted from his review written as motion picture critic of his paper:

"This is a picture of appealing reality in which we have a cross section of a home and family life where the mother is the guiding factor. I am certain it will touch you no matter who you may be, and you will be delighted with it.

"The cast is one perfectly selected. You will highly approve of Mae Marsh's portrayal of Ma Shelby. You will never cease to admire James Dunn's sincere performance as Johnny, or Sally Eilers' as his sweetheart Isabelle. The rest of the cast which includes James Kirkwood, an old-timer, is excellent. The director, Henry King, must also be complimented for turning out such a fine piece of work."

In Bogota (N. J.), a suburban town of New York City, the review was tied up with school work through the interest of the High School English teacher. The Eng-

lish class pupils attending were asked to write compositions in the form of a review of the picture. We asked to be allowed to see these papers in order to be able to pass on word of them, for the school work tie-up is a valuable one and can well be used by Better Films groups as a means of interesting the schools in what they are doing in the work of building interest and support for good pictures. In answer to our question several A+ papers have come to us. If space permitted we would publish them all but we are limited to the following quotations.

One bright young freshman interested in dramatics, sports and many school activities, begins her story thus: "*Over the Hill*, a Fox production, was given in a large preview theatre in Fox's office building in New York City, November 7th, 1931. The story was set in a New England country town. The first scene, showing dawn, with the usual farmyard morning alarm, crowing roosters and a meowing cat. It was the beginning of another day for the busy mother. It was her duty to see that her four children were lovingly awakened, washed, fed and dressed and sent off to school at the little, red, one room school house. Each one of her children was a different temperament. The oldest boy, a sissy, religious hypocrite and a thief. The second son, John, was a regular fellow, full of mischief but upright and manly. The youngest brother, a sensitive artist, handsome and honest. The baby, a girl, was the usual type, somewhat pretty and yet as boyish as one might expect, having three brothers older than she. She was greatly loved by her brothers. The father, an indolent, weak, but loving husband, was not to be relied on for financial support, so it rested on the mother, a strong, sturdy, old-fashioned one, who worked hard day and night to keep her family well clothed and fed. She was the guiding, supporting influence in the family."

Another review opens with these words,

"In my estimation, *Over the Hill* is one of the best pictures that is playing at the present time. The directing, acting, make-up and characters were splendid. Mae Marsh as Ma Shelby, played her part exceptionally well but credit must also be given to James Dunn and Sally Eilers who played the parts of Johnny and Isabelle respectively," and closes with these, "*Over the Hill* is so human, so real. After the mother had slaved and worked for her children, they refused to support and protect her when she is old. Nevertheless, she loves them dearly. How well this story applies to some people today!"

A third student prefixes her review with a listing of certain outstanding points such as characters, type, silent or talkie, parts, and scenes I was impressed by. Under the latter are given "Johnny when a child," "Death of Pa Shelby," "Johnny's return from jail," "Rebuffs of sons and daughters," "Johnny's return from Alaska," and "Ending together." The story she writes "is that of a mother, Mae Marsh, who lives to see her children grow up and leave her in old age with no provider but charity. James Dunn, the only worthy member of her large family, returns in the end and provides a happy ending. The picture is more than that of an inspiring drama; it is one of laughter, romance and heart-breaks, only to be ended in the tenderness of love."

In order to show you a variance of opinion the following statements are quoted from ballots of some of the other young reviewers: "The picture was very enjoy-

able, though a bit melodramatic"; "The beginning was too serious—there was too much of the fight between the two brothers"; "Slightly exaggerated, too melodramatic"; "Mae Marsh is an exceptionally good actress and should have more pictures to play in—the scene in which she walked to the poorhouse was very impossible as is shown when James Dunn rode, the walk was entirely too long;" and "Too drawn out."

But to offset these and have a happy ending to our story here are some favorable ballot comments from enthusiastic reviewers: "This picture, was to my group and to myself, one of wonderful emotional aspect and I can honestly say that its filming and its sentimental shots are marvelous. The touches of comedy relieve the picture of having too much emotion"; and "Acting is excellent—a most unusual plot"; "A marvelous production, truly depicting mother love, and its bearing upon life, as we mortals know it."



BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

CHRISTMAS programs have been so arranged at the Little Picture House, the theatre of the Film Bureau in New York City, that the different types of audiences will find for the holidays the kind of film fare that pleases them. In order to take care of the many young school vacationists who will be attending the theatre at that time, two features are arranged for every day from December 22nd to 30th, one to run from 2 to 6 o'clock, the other from 6 to 12 o'clock. The pictures booked for the nine days are: *Happy Days* and *Born to Love*, *The Cisco Kid* and *The Common Law*, *Daddy Long Legs* and *The Smiling Lieutenant*, *Rango* and *Sin Takes a Holiday*, *Skippy* and *Laughter*, *Tom Sawyer* and *Morocco*, *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tarnished Lady*, *A Connecticut Yankee* and *Bad Girl*, *Penrod* and *Sam* and *The Reckless Hour*. On Christmas Eve carols will be sung from 11:30 to 12:00 o'clock and patrons are invited to be guests of the theatre.

In addition to the afternoon shows for children three morning shows are planned. At the showings of *Skippy* and *Penrod and Sam*, Mickey Mouse doll presentations will add to the festivity for the youngsters. The last in this holiday series of junior shows will be a showing of *Alice in Wonderland* on January 2nd. The regular season of Saturday morning screenings for children began on November 28th with *Huckleberry Finn*.

Another activity of this specialized film house is the showing of a number of pictures in a History and Literature series. The first of these was on November 14th at which time *Old Ironsides* was shown, the second was on November 21st, presenting *The Virginian*.

In this plan is a valuable suggestion for school tie-ups which Better Films Councils could well suggest to their theatre managers and schools.

THE uniting of the interest of many organizations of a community into a Better Films Council is, while quite widely done, still something deserving of congratulations, because it signifies a spirit of cooperation and a willingness to give up individual activity for that of the movement, but some Councils have gone even further and united not only different organizations but different communities as well. Such a one is the Chester Pike Better Films Council of Pennsylvania.

In this Council many Philadelphia suburban communities are working together in their better films interest. The Council was organized last Spring. In the by-laws adopted at that time was incorporated the purpose of supporting selected pictures and family night programs at the theatres. Representatives from Women's Clubs, American Legion, Parent-Teacher Association, W. C. T. U., Business Men's Associations and many individuals, became charter members of the Council and took part in the discussion of plans. During the summer the Council circulated through its membership the names of the selected pictures appearing at the local theatres and the date of their showing.

Mrs. B. Logan Edwards is the very efficient and enthusiastic president of this Council. She has told us of the excellent junior matinees which are a part of the Council's activity. On Saturday afternoon preceding the regular show a special showing is arranged for the children with carefully selected pictures, local talent work by the children and singing—all the things which make the youngsters realize that this is their very own show. These programs are being very well patronized, receiving the support of the mothers and the attention of the children.

Much recognition has been given to all of the Council's activity and the interest is spreading to still other communities.

The Council wishing to be informed on all phases of the motion picture has had among the speakers at different meetings Mr. Eric M. Knight, Philadelphia newspaper motion picture critic, several theatre managers and two members of the Better Films Council of the National Board, Mrs. Harry G. Grover, president of the Rutherford (N. J.) Better Films Committee, and Mrs. Leon A. McIntire, Better Films Chairman, Eastern Division, National D. A. R.

NIAGARA FALLS is to everyone such a romantic city—where all the honeymooners go, or at least used to before jumping on a boat for Europe or taking a motor trek across the country were so common—that it is difficult to associate with it all those civic movements one thinks of in connection with other cities. But there are people other than sightseers in Niagara Falls and interested in many things, one of which is better films. This activity is carried on under the Federation of Church Women. Mrs. W. J. Marsh of the Federation writes to us that "The Church and the Motion Picture is one of the five local departments" in the organization. Last spring they began the preparation of a Motion Picture Bulletin, giving information on the pictures showing in town for the month. This has led to establishing contacts with all the local theatre managers. The first general open meeting of the Church Federation was held on November 19th, under the Department of the Church and the Motion Picture and was addressed by a local minister and a local theatre manager. The Committee's activity was reported and copies of the Bulletin giving information on forthcoming pictures were distributed. The musical part of the program was furnished by the Mother's Clubs so that many interests were brought together in a common interest of good films, their exhibition and support. Other groups working with the Church Federation are the Y. M. C. A., Y. W. C. A., Boy Scouts and Parent-Teacher Associations.

THE Birmingham (Ala.) Better Films Council has been in existence for a good many years, long enough to know the value of preparedness in relation to their work, so as early as their Bulletin of last May they asked each representative of a club or Parent-Teacher Association on the Council to see "that your organization includes in next year's program a talk on Better Films work in Birmingham. The chairman of the speakers' committee will provide a speaker." The June meeting was a "gala event and devoted to fun."

The Council members at their July meeting were told of the special honor which had come to their president, Mrs. Edgar Collins, who had been appointed State Motion Picture Chairman of the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs. This was indeed a recognition of the work of the Birmingham Council and undoubtedly means that the worthy activity conducted there will now be a pattern for state-wide activity.

In the Council's work of assisting the public with helpful motion picture information each Sunday night over a radio station is announced any specially fine picture for children to be shown the following week.

Above we spoke of the age of the Better Films Council but we did not say how old but here we will give away the secret by telling you that on October the thirteenth it celebrated its tenth birthday. The celebration had unusual features hardly possible ten years ago. It was held at the Birmingham Airport. The Auto Committee furnished transportation to the Airport where among the attendance prizes were three free airplane rides over the city provided through the courtesy of the Airport manager.

The president of the American Federation of Women's Clubs, the president of the Parent-Teacher Council, members of the original executive board of the organization, the president of the Better Films Committee in Macon, Georgia, and many others were honor guests at this anniversary celebration which summed up past accomplishments and started a new year of activity.

THE Albany (N. Y.) Junior Entertainment and Film Guild sees that the children of Albany are well supplied with appropriate amusements in many lines. When writing to us from time to time Mrs. F. W. Clark, Director, who has been working with the young people of the city since 1914, tells of this in a very characteristic staccato fashion. This is the way a September letter summed up months of activity: "Well, am still on earth puttering around—just finished with *Huckleberry Finn*, biggest show we have ever done. Last day of the run we had a Tom Sawyer-Huckleberry Finn matinee afternoon—RKO, turned hundreds of children away. Still working with the newspapers. We sponsored 24 first-runs this year. Next is *Penrod and Sam* at the Warner Theatre. We had *Skippy* at Fox, also *Daddy Long Legs*, *Tom Sawyer* and *Forbidden Adventure* at the RKO. No tie-up with any one house. We are rather inclined to sponsor family pictures next. (They have in the past concentrated their interest on the junior matinee film). We are recommending *Alexander Hamilton* for high school students stating that it is entirely for the historical and educational value.

"The Guild is being enlarged to 25 active members with 10 associated clubs, also as many sustaining members as we can get. This year we sent over 100 children to summer camps. Cost us \$1,165. We made it out of entertainments of all kinds, also by Hallowe'en party, Christmas party, free ice cream, candy and toys given to every kiddie present—cards sent to the poorest youngsters in town, the Junior League and private schools assisted. Had a Children's Day at a summer park—everything free with cake and cream." Remembering our youthful days, ice cream and cake made a party any time, so we congratulate the Albany youngsters on getting their films "à la mode."

The latest event planned by the Guild to aid the needy youngsters of Albany was the children's own film benefit on Saturday morning, November 27th. More than 3,000

little philanthropists poured out a stream of dimes and nickels that totalled a \$400 gift to the less fortunate children. The youngsters learned the joy of giving and had a good time. It was reflected in their smiles and in their hearty applause. A ballet of the seasons with graceful young artists opened the dance playlet. The 11 little Tin Soldiers were very thrilling—they were boys from the Albany Orphan Asylum clad in splendid red and white uniforms which they made themselves. One little lad who pranced before them like a general on horseback, evolved high glee. Old King Cole with his fiddlers introduced a rollicking air and was followed with other talented children in the roles of childhood favorites—Red Riding Hood, Miss Muffet, Jack Horner, the Noah family, and a host of others.

More than 300 boys from the Orphan Asylum and other institutions were guests and arrived in buses. Scores of other boys and girls received tickets free. In all the Thanksgiving baskets distributed by the Trinity Institute tickets had been placed. The Mother's Club also was host to a large group as were other organizations.

The entire receipts of the show went to Trinity Institute to be used in their work of relief among all children throughout the city, regardless of race, color or creed.

LITERATURE from the National Board has been sent to a number of groups recently for distribution or for display at conventions. Among the organizations were the New York, New Jersey and Ohio Parent-Teacher Associations, and the Eastern Division of the D. A. R. Conference representing seven states. We have mentioned elsewhere the New York D. A. R. and there were quite a number of requests from local groups, schools, et cetera, which we were pleased to fill. In this connection if your group or any that you may know about would be interested to receive material for such uses please send us word and we will be very glad to send sample copies, lists, and other publications.

“THE Better Films Committee As A Force in the Community” might well be the subject for the chronicling of the latest achievement of the Rutherford (N. J.) Better Films Committee. This energetic Committee has for the past four years been sponsoring regular week-end family night programs, holding that the showing during the week-ends of the school year of films that will appeal to the family from the oldest down to the twelve-year-old, who is generally considered old enough to attend commercial motion pictures, is the most workable method of providing suitable pictures for children. The theatre’s policy has been to give the town what it wants and will come to see and the managers have been very willing to work with the Better Films Committee in presenting a type of film that families could enjoy together once a week. So the family week-end program became an established thing and the people depended on it. Recently when a change of management threatened the continuance of this settled plan the Committee received numerous letters and many phone calls from interested townspeople who viewed the change with alarm. The following excerpt from a letter is typical of the expressions of opinion that were received from heads of prominent organizations, ministers, parents and others interested in the movies as recreation: “These family programs have met with very general approval among the parents of children in our community and have, in my estimation, been very worth while. In introducing these family week-end programs and securing the hearty cooperation of the managers of our local motion picture theatre the Better Films Committee has rendered the community a most valuable service and its discontinuance, just when the people of Rutherford have learned to fully appreciate it, would be a real misfortune.”

The group laid before the new management the wishes of the community and the manager readily agreed to continue a policy

which is not an experiment but a popular and established feature of the theatre’s program. He has submitted a list of the week-end films for a month to the Committee and it includes some of the most-talked-of current films, such as *The Cisco Kid*, *Over the Hill*, and *The Beloved Bachelor*. So from this it can be seen that contact with the exhibitor of the local theatre builds up a fine spirit of cooperation and mutual interest.

The Junior Review group under the guidance of its director, Mrs. Alvin Herald, is becoming more and more an integral part of the Senior Committee. The Junior Reviewers aside from their regular monthly meetings have sponsored an invitational showing in the High School, helped the Better Films Committee with its special matinees and entertainments, attended National Board of Review meetings, and their latest work is that of holding an essay contest among the students in the 9th to 12th grades. Every one in this division is eligible to write an essay of 200 to 500 words on their favorite picture. Cash prizes of two dollars for the best essay and two one dollar prizes for the second and third donated by the Better Films Committee, will be awarded to the three best and the first twenty entrants will receive passes to the local theatre through the courtesy of the manager.

A few quotations from the reports made at the annual meeting of different committee chairmen will give an idea of work accomplished during the past year. The Public Library Cooperation Chairman reported: “At the time of writing this report, the center of interest in the library is *The Connecticut Yankee* and Will Rogers. Books as suggested reading in connection with the picture are on display together with the review from the National Board of Review Magazine, pictures of Mark Twain and stills of the photoplay. It is the stills that quickly draw attention to the table and call forth comments, which if we had time to collect might be worth passing on as of interest to a better films committee or even to the man-

ager of a theatre. **The Silent Enemy* brought out more comments than any picture that the library has given publicity to this year. Young and old, men and women, boys and girls, all spoke of it and many took pains to ask us if we had seen it. A young man said, "It is one of the finest." He had hardly turned away when an elderly man stepped up and said, "Just been down to see that picture, most remarkable thing I have ever seen." A teacher follows and asks to borrow the stills later to use in the classroom. On the library side of this co-operative publicity come requests to reserve Twain's books and someone takes from the table Paine's life of Mark Twain and asks to take it home. Book-marks with suggestive lists for *Disraeli*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and *Cimarron* have all successfully advertised both the pictures and the books. Table displays for 12 pictures have been arranged in the adult room and pictures and books in the children's room for appropriate juvenile plays. A list of books on the motion picture was prepared and distributed to members at one of the monthly meetings of the Committee".

The chairman for the Exceptional Photoplays Committee writes, "This Committee has sent postals to an ever-increasing list of patrons of the better films advising them of the coming to the Rivoli of those pictures which are rated as 'exceptional' by the National Board of Review. The large audiences at the exceptional pictures, the increasing number of names on the exceptional list, and the numerous inquiries concerning other invitational showings lead the Committee to believe that its work has been to good purpose."

The Better Films Committee, started nearly eight years ago, has built up its community organization and has directed its activities for two definite purposes: to gather funds of information about the mo-

tion picture and its uses and to disseminate them to the public and, to serve the public in the most constructive way by helping the community to make the best and most practical use of the motion picture as it serves a social use in education, in culture and recreation.

KNOWING that the Spartanburg (S. C.) Better Films Committee is one that has carried on for a long time and therefore must pursue a method which is workable and offer a service which is valuable we asked them for a report. It is in rather a condensed form with so much of interesting activity compact into one sentence in the telling that we will sometime ask for detail, but for the present we set down here the story as presented:

"The Spartanburg Better Films Committee has completed its ninth year. During that time the Committee has reviewed all the pictures at the local theatres, and up to this last year held weekly Saturday morning children's matinees at one of the local theatres. When the new sound pictures came in the cost was too great to continue the children's matinees, unless we could about double our attendance, which we found we could not do, and the silent pictures were out of the question, as we could not find a place to show them. Now that the cost of the sound pictures is much less, we hope to be able to give a few children's matinees this winter.

"We started a weekly Photoplay Guide in our local newspapers but the summer vacations interfered with their work somewhat, however we are planning some effective things along that line this winter. All of our review reports are written up in the Committee books, which are kept in the box-offices of all the local theatres, after every review, and the report is then given to our papers. Pictures are reported either for the family or adult audience suitability.

"The manager of our local theatres allowed us, free of all cost, a Saturday morning Children's Christmas matinee, the ad-

*Many communities which failed to see this remarkable film will be glad to know it is now available from the Beacon Films, Inc., 25 W. 45th St., New York City.

mission charge, a pound of food, to be given to the Red Cross for needy families. We received a hundred dollars worth of provisions. The Chairman, Mrs. N. Irving Hyatt, spoke over the local radio station this year about the work the Committee has been doing in the past, and what they plan to do in the future. She hopes to do so again this winter some time, as a great many women have expressed a desire for that sort of information to be broadcast, feeling sure that the mothers would appreciate having a better understanding of just how we are trying to help them in the selection of suitable pictures for their children to see.

"We have a yearly luncheon at which our local theatre managers are our guests. The Committee has always been most fortunate in having the hearty cooperation of the public press and theatres."

FILM entertainment for the children of Binghamton (N. Y.) is receiving the attention of various organizations in the city. The Chairman of the Motion Picture Committee of the Junior Charity League writes that the League is very anxious to arrange matinees to give the children the right kind of pictures and that they also hope thereby to make some money toward the support of the two day nurseries which they maintain. Two members of the Junior Charity League were visitors to our office and we were thus enabled to hear directly of this interest.

Another group working with this activity but in a different way is the Parent-Teacher Association. The Motion Picture Chairman of the Alexander Hamilton P.-T. A. writes of the programs which they have been conducting monthly in the school building. She says, "We want to give the children at least one program a month and we do want to give them suitable films". These showings begin at 6:30 on Friday evenings, with a program lasting until 8:15 o'clock. The same difficulty with the plan is reported from Binghamton as from other cities—the very limited supply of silent non-inflam-

mable film and that is what must be used with the equipment in the school. This is the reason it is so essential to get the cooperation of theatre managers in allowing citizen groups to put on programs especially selected by them at the theatres, for there there is a wider selection of films and the youngsters can then have the thrill of going to the theatres and not to the school and the parents can have the assurance that their children are seeing a carefully chosen program under proper supervision. Wisely different methods are being tried in Binghamton, for junior matinees, family night programs, school programs and all such plans are ones adaptable to local needs and desires.

The first Junior Charity League matinee was held on November the twenty-first showing *Peter Pan*. The League appealed to the National Board for assistance in locating a print of this favorite of children's films and we were indeed happy to be of assistance to them. This organization has the cooperation of the Board of Education in the movement to sponsor the best pictures for children.

THE work of Mrs. Patrick Bray as president of the Atlanta Better Films Committee for the past year was so highly appreciated by her associates that she has been honored with re-election to the office.

One of her first acts upon her re-election was to extend to all those working with her appreciation for their cooperation. In the June Bulletin she says, "Again I am to serve you as president of this splendid committee for another year. This thought brings to me great happiness. I have found a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction in my service as your president during the past year for everywhere I have met with ready response and marvelous cooperation; from officers, chairmen, members, friends outside of our committee, theatre managers, newspapers, hotels, churches, patriotic and civic organizations—our objects and aims are be-

coming better known—our committee is becoming better known—our committee is growing in numbers, in interest and in strength and I do not hesitate to predict that the coming year will be the best so far in the history of the Atlanta Better Films Committee. This is not *my* work, it is *yours*, and the faithful and enthusiastic manner in which *you* discharged every duty last year gives me the courage for this prediction.”

An effective method used by this Committee to assure support of the good pictures is the Telephone Committee. This somewhat unique sub-Committee may have interest for other Committees and so we give here a description from Mrs. Bray of its operation, “Our entire membership is divided into ten equal sections, with ten sub-chairmen who receive their instructions from the telephone chairman, and make all necessary reports back to the telephone chairman. This makes it possible for a message to go to hundreds by direct contact within two hours, at the request of the president.”

There is a sentence in the September Bulletin underscored, the thought of which we wish to repeat here, it is that those interested in better films should belong to the community Better Films Committee and take a stand for the finer type of pictures, rather than become too much preoccupied with criticism, cuts and eliminations, support those pictures that can bear the light of intelligence and culture, and watch the others go.

SKIPPY opened the year for the children's matinees at the State Theatre in Charlotte, N. C. The picture was presented with an educational subject and a comedy. The matinees are held every Saturday morning. The chairman of the Junior Matinee Committee, a division of the Better Films Committee sees that representatives from the Committee and from the Parent-Teacher Association chaperon the matinee. Boy Scouts are the ushers.

GROUPS desiring and sponsoring the good films in the theatres find their activity a pleasant and simplified one when they have the cooperation of a sympathetic theatre manager. Such a manager is Mr. M. M. Shenkmann, City Manager of Fox Theatres in Watertown, New York.

Mr. Shenkmann addressed recently a meeting of the Northern Federation of Women's Clubs at the Flower Memorial Library in Watertown. The subject matter was better films for the community and some current film features. A discussion followed Mr. Shenkmann's talk in which members of a special committee representing five clubs of the city and others took part.

Highlights of the discussion were as follows: “Special Saturday matinees for school children, made up of educational and comedy features, to be held once a month, were urged by members of the committee, and Mr. Shenkmann said that these could be arranged. An effort would be made to interest the Parent-Teacher Associations in the city if the matinees could be held, that the associations might plan for groups of children to attend, chaperoned by various mothers.”

“The committee found the majority of pictures shown here in recent months satisfactory and not objectionable in so far as attendance by young people is concerned. Comedies and short features were discussed and although most of them were found not to be particularly vicious some were considered vulgar. It was admitted that it was difficult to draw a line between a good and bad picture in view of the fact that particularly good acting sometimes outweighed occasional suggestive features.”

Other points were taken up and some calling for further discussion and action Mr. Shenkmann promised to meet again with the special committee. Literature of the National Board was distributed at the meeting to an appreciative audience, we are pleased to know, and we hope to have further reports to make from this interested group.

“CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS” is the heading of a page in “The Guardian,” a publication of the Camp Fire Girls leaders. Under it is told little stories of the success which certain Camp Fire groups have had with a particular sort of Christmas activity which they have chosen and which has become a tradition in their community and is repeated each year. Better Films Committees have their Christmas traditions too, and so they may at this time like to hear of some others, therefore we are pleased to reprint the following because it is a movie story :

“Des Moines children look forward to the Toy Movie by means of which Camp Fire Girls garner their supply of toys to mend each Christmas time. Christmas is drawing near and the stores are putting out their Christmas decorations and displays. The Camp Fire Girls are always right up to the minute and so they have already planned and carried out their Annual Toy Movie to get the toys ready to begin work on in the Camp Fire Girls Toy Shop. The Strand Theatre gave the use of the theatre and the current picture. A Toy Movie poster was designed by one of the Camp Fire Girls and the members came into headquarters and painted them. Eighty-five were made and distributed in the city library and ten branches, all the schools and a number of the churches. Newspaper publicity was a big feature.

“A block each way at eight-thirty Saturday morning was a line of children, every color and type imaginable each with a toy wrapped and tucked under his arm. Ten girls in their service uniforms, each behind a big box took up the toys as the children filed in. A local bakery furnished the boxes and also a truck to haul the toys from the theatre to the Toy Shop. Hundreds of toys were turned in, everything from blackboards to wee little dolls, and they were all put in one room. The Health Center fumigated the toys and the Guardians will sort them and get them ready for the opening of the Toy Shop.”

UPON the appointment of Mrs. William H. Pouch, who had been New York State Better Films Chairman of the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, as vice-president general of the Society, Miss Edith Ford, who had served as the very capable chairman of a New York Chapter, was made New York State Chairman.

She is now carrying her interest to this larger field and soon after her appointment began to visit different parts of the state. She told us that in Rochester she met members of the Rochester Better Films Council active in the work of the National Board. It must be gratifying to her, as it was to Mrs. Pouch, to see this work so flourishing since this extensive Council is the outgrowth of the interest in better films of a local D. A. R. chapter.

Recently Miss Ford attended a D. A. R. Conference in Schenectady, and she reported a most interesting and strenuous week. The pictures shown were the D. A. R. flag trailers, the Tamassee School films, and the Yale Chronicle picture *Yorktown*, commemorating the Yorktown Sesquicentennial celebration. And what pleased us particularly is that Miss Ford reported upon her return as follows, “You might be interested to know that the literature which you sent for my exhibit was every bit used and seized upon the first day.”

Other District Councils of Chapters visited were in Buffalo, Syracuse, Elmira and Cortland. The final Council was held at the Commodore Hotel in New York City, November 23rd.

At each meeting Miss Ford gave a talk on better films work and among other things reminded the chairmen that the primary purpose of the Better Films Committees is to raise the standard of the motion pictures through discrimination.



SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIOUS INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

***BEN HUR**—From the novel by General Lew Wallace, directed by Fred Niblo, with a cast including Ramon Novarro, Francis X. Bushman, Frank Currier, May McAvoy and Claire MacDowell. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 14 reels. This film, brought down from the shelf of silent pictures and given an accompaniment of sound and music, stands up extremely well in all the points that were its chief claim to being exceptional—its historical background and its spectacle, especially the galley fight and the chariot race. Some of the acting, particularly in the love scenes, seems antiquated, but the film still remains a masterpiece of its kind. *Family audience.*

CAVALIER OF THE WEST—Written and directed by J. P. McCarthy, with a cast including Harry Carey and Kane Richmond. Artclass, 7 reels. An enjoyable melodrama of a Western army post in the nineties, with unusually good handling and acting for a picture of this kind. Two unfamiliar Spanish or Mexican ladies share acting honors with the dependable Harry Carey and a new juvenile, Kane Richmond. *Family audience.*

***THE CHAMP**—Written by Frances Marion, directed by King Vidor, with a cast including Wallace Beery, Jackie Cooper, Irene Rich and Hale Hamilton. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 10 reels. Unusually effective acting in a not too effective story of a broken-down ex-champion prize fighter and his little boy—full of humor and feeling, with another extraordinary performance by the small Jackie Cooper. *Family audience.*

THE CHEAT—Written by Hector Turnbull, directed by George Abbott, with a cast including Tallulah Bankhead and Irving Pichel. Paramount, 7 reels. The story of a young wife who tries to pay off her gambling debts without her husband's knowledge, and the complications that follow. The story has been done more than once before, but the acting is good and the picture fairly satisfactory. *Mature audience.*

CORSAIR—Adapted from a story by Walton Green, directed by Roland West, with a cast including Chester Morris and Alison Lloyd. United Artists, 8 reels. A young college graduate, cheated in Wall Street, goes out for ruthless business methods on a big scale, and beats the high-handed men at their own game. Incidentally there is some modern pirating in the rum fleet. *Mature audience.*

THE DECEIVER—Adapted from "Unwanted" by Bela Muni and Abem Finkel, directed by Louis King, with a cast including Ian Keith, Lloyd Hughes and Dorothy Sebastian. Columbia, 7 reels. A good mystery picture of a back-stage murder, unusually well handled, which piles up uncertainty to a satisfying climax. *Mature audience.*

***EXPLORERS OF THE WORLD**—Assembled by Harold Noice. Raspin Productions, 10 reels. An extremely interesting collection of exploration films made by noted members of the Explorers Club. Harold McCracken goes to the Arctic, finding bear, walrus and a Stone Age mummy; Gene Lamb to Bali, China, Thibet and India; James L. Clarke to Africa; J. R. Stanhouse and Lawrence M. Gould—separately—to the Antarctic; and Harold Noice to the headwaters of the Amazon. Those seeking entertainment need not be afraid of this because it happens also to be instructive. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

FLYING HIGH—From the musical comedy by Henderson, Brown and DeSylva, directed by Charles F. Reisner, with a cast including Bert Lahr, Charlotte Greenwood and Pat O'Brien. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. An ordinary Broadway musical farce, enlivened by the broad comedy of Bert Lahr and Charlotte Greenwood, which will be thought hilarious by many people and vulgar by some. *Mature audience.*

***FRANKENSTEIN**—*From the novel by Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley directed by James Whale, with a cast including Colin Clive, Boris Karloff, John Boles and Mae Clarke. Universal, 8 reels. The famous old tale of the man who discovered how to create life and fashioned a man who turned out to be a monster. Full of eerie thrills and horrors, effectively done. Mature audience.*

THE GAY BUCKAROO—*Written by Leete R. Brown, directed by Phil Rosen, with a cast including Hoot Gibson, Myrna Kennedy and Roy D'Arcy. Hollywood, 7 reels. A pleasant and rather novel story of a cowboy who does some amateur reforming with a spoilt girl and her shiftless father—incidentally defeating some scoundrelly villains. Hoot Gibson is amusing and refreshing. Family audience. Junior matinee.*

GOOD SPORT—*Written by William Hurlbut, directed by Kenneth McKenna, with a cast including Linda Watkins, John Boles, Minna Gombell and Allan Dinehart. Fox, 7 reels. A so-called "daring" picture, in which a young wife, on discovering the infidelity of her husband, goes to live among some gold-diggers to study their methods of attracting and holding men. Its probing into life is all very superficial, but it has some entertaining qualities. Mature audience.*

***DIE GROSSE SEHNSUCHT** (The Great Passion)—*Written by Hans R. Zerlett, directed by Stefan Szekely, with a cast headed by Camilla Horn. Tobis-Forenfilms, 9 reels. A fascinating picture for anyone interested in the inner workings of movie studios. Done in German, the story is rather slight and of a familiar pattern, but it gives a chance to bring in practically every German film celebrity in a natural and interesting fashion. Family audience.*

HIS WOMAN—*Adapted from Dale Collins' novel, "The Sentimentalist," directed by Edward Sloman, with a cast including Gary Cooper and Claudette Colbert. Paramount, 8 reels. The captain of a freighter adopts a baby and engages a girl to care for it on the way home. The girl's past comes back to make trouble. The two principles act their best, with a most engaging baby to assist them. Mature audience.*

LOCAL BOY MAKES GOOD—*Adapted from the play, "The Poor Nut" by J. C. and Elliot Nugent, directed by Mervyn LeRoy, with a cast including Joe E. Brown, Dorothy Lee and Ruth Hall. First National, 7 reels. A farcical scrambling of athletics and psycho-analysis in an amusing college yarn in which Joe E. Brown evolves from a timid botanist to a triumphant track man. Brown comes nearer than usual to a real characterization. Family audience.*

NICE WOMEN—*Play by William Grew, directed by Edwin Knopf, with a cast including Sidney Fox, Frances Dee and Russell Gleason. Universal, 7 reels. Forced into a wealthy marriage by her family, a girl rebels at the eleventh hour. Rather amusing, with some good acting. Mature audience.*

ONCE A LADY—*Adapted by Zoe Akins from the novel "The Second Life," directed by Guthrie McClintic, with a cast including Ruth Chatterton, Jill Esmond, Geoffrey Kerr and Ivor Novello. Paramount, 8 reels. Ruth Chatterton gives a splendid performance as a Russian who marries an Englishman and goes to live with his stodgy family, Mature audience.*

***OVER THE HILL**—*Adapted from Will Carlton's poem, "Over the Hill to the Poorhouse," directed by Henry King, with a cast including Mae Marsh, James Dunn, Sally Eilers, James Kirkwood and Olin Howland. Fox, 9 reels. The famous old movie classic, little changed except by the addition of dialogue and sound—as effective as ever, with Mae Marsh coming triumphantly back to the screen as the mother. Some excellent picturing of small-town America live with his stodgy family. Mature audience.*

THE POCATELLO KID (or Fighting Mad)—*Written by W. Scott Darling, directed by Phil Rosen, with a cast including Ken Maynard and Marceline Day. Tiffany, 6 reels. Ken Maynard is juggled into the post of a dead sheriff, with interesting complications. The ranchers and cowboys are particularly life-like, and Ken and his white horse as likeable as ever. Family audience.*

POSSESSED—*Adapted from Edgar Selwyn's play, "The Mirage," directed by Clarence Brown, with a cast including Joan Crawford, Clark Gable, Wallace Ford and Skeets Gallagher. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. Another of the series of luxury-loving young ladies who eat their cake, with all the frosting, and yet manage in the end to have it, too. Two popular players act their best, which is very good, and the picture is entertaining in spite of a good deal of gilt-edged pretentiousness. Mature audience.*

***RICH MAN'S FOLLY**—*Suggested by Charles Dickens, "Dombey and Son," directed by John Cromwell, with a cast including George Bancroft, David Durand, Frances Dee and Robert Ames. Paramount, 9 reels. An interesting and moving story of a man whose ambition to make money, guiding his whole life, nearly wrecks his family. Particularly well directed and acted, with an unusual performance by little David Durand. Mature audience.*

SOUL OF THE SLUMS—*Written by W. Scott Darling, directed by Frank Strayer, with a cast including William Collier, Jr., and Blanche Mehaffey. Action Pictures, 6 reels. An interesting story of redemption in the slums. A kindly old man, running a mission, enlists the help of three former jail-birds, two of whom provide a great deal of humor. Family audience.*

THE SPECKLED BAND—*Adapted from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's story, directed by Jack Raymond, with a cast including Raymond Massey and Lyn Harding. First Division, 7 reels. An interesting and exciting production of one of the most thrilling of the Sherlock Holmes stories. Well acted by an English company. Mature audience.*

***STRICTLY DISHONORABLE**—Adapted from *Preston Sturges' play, directed by John M. Stahl, with a cast including Paul Lukas, Sidney Fox and Lewis Stone. Universal, 10 reels.* The amusing stage comedy done into a sophisticated and amusing picture. In a small speakeasy frequented by a judge and an operatic tenor a young Southern girl, sight-seeing with her fiance, falls in love with the tenor. A pleasing picture with excellent acting. *Mature audience.*

SUICIDE FLEET—Adapted from *Commander Herbert M. Jones' novel, "Mystery Ship," directed by Albert Rogell, with a cast including Bill Boyd, Robert Armstrong and James Gleason. RKO-Pathe, 9 reels.* A story of three friends who join the navy and becomes rivals for the same girl. An interesting picture with good acting and excellent scenes aboard the boats. *Family audience.*

***TOUCHDOWN**—Adapted from *Francis Wallace's story "Stadium," directed by Norman McLeod, with a cast including Richard Arlen, Jack Oakie, Regis Toomey and Peggy Shannon. Paramount, 8 reels.* An unusual football story, coming much nearer to the truth of college athletics than the screen is accustomed to. Well directed and acted. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

TWO FISTED JUSTICE—Written and directed by *G. A. Durlam, with a cast headed by Tom Tyler. Monogram, 6 reels.* Tom Tyler defending the frontier for Lincoln when the army was needed to fight for the Union. Though lacking somewhat in the polish of more expensive productions it is interesting, well done, and has considerable historical value. *Family audience.*

X MARKS THE SPOT—Written by *Warren Duff and Gordon Kahn, directed by Erle C. Kenton, with a cast including Lew Cody, Wallace Ford and Sally Blane, Tiffany, 6 reels.* Fast moving and excellently acted story of newspaper life in which the editor of the scandal column becomes involved in a murder. *Mature audience.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

Around the World in 80 Minutes—8 rls.

(See page 8)

Family audience.

Junior matinee.

Surrender—7 rls.

(See page 6)

Mature audience.

SHORT SUBJECTS

THE BEACH PARTY (Mickey Mouse Cartoon)—*Columbia, 1 reel.* Mickey and his friends at the sea shore. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BIG DAME HUNTING—*RKO-Radio, 2 reels.* Ned Sparks tries to hire a cook—the picture has lots of entertainment in it. *Family audience.*

BOSKO'S FOX HUNT (Looney Tunes)—*Vitaphone, 1 reel.* Amusing cartoon of a fox hunt with gay music. *Family audience.*

CANINE CAPERS (Sports Review)—*Educational, 1 reel.* Interesting and picturesque reel about dogs. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

CHILDREN OF THE SUN (Vagabond Adventures)—*RKO-Pathe, 1 reel.* Natives of Central America and their customs. *Family audience.*

CHINA (Terrytoons)—*Educational, 1 reel.* Cartoon made differently amusing by giving all the animals pigtailed. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE FOX HUNT (Silly Symphonies)—*Columbia, 1 reel.* An amusing fox hunt with clever synchronization and a comical ending. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE GALLOPING GHOST (Serial)—*Mascot, 12 episodes.* Interesting and exciting serial in which Red Grange in trying to save his friend from a football gambling ring is himself accused of taking bribes. The last episode is unusually good. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

HARE MAIL (Oswald Cartoon)—*Universal, 1 reel.* The Lucky Rabbit saves his sweetheart's life and the mortgage. *Family audience.*

HASH-HOUSE BLUES (Krazy Kat Cartoon)—*Columbia, 1 reel.* Krazy as a waiter in a restaurant. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

HOT NEWS MARGIE—*Vitaphone, 1 reel.* Marjorie Beebe as a whirlwind reporter. Rough slapstick—fairly funny. *Family audience.*

IN DUTCH (Aesop Fable)—*RKO-Pathe, 1 reel.* A cartoon with everything and everybody wearing wooden shoes. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK (Talkartoons)—*Paramount, 1 reel.* Bimbo goes up the beanstalk to rescue Betty Boop. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE JAZZ REPORTERS—*Paramount, 1 reel.* A newspaper office is jazzed up and they write everything to music. *Family audience.*

JAZZBO SINGER—*Columbia, 1 reel.* A comedy with an all-monkey cast, very amusing and cleverly done. A lazy son leaves home and makes his fortune as a mammy singer. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE KICK-OFF—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels.* The "Boy Friends" in a comedy which mixes up football and a racketeer's scheme to win on the result of the game. Some good laughs in it. *Family audience.*

THE LORELEI (Terrytoons)—*Educational*, 1 reel. An amusing cartoon. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

LOVE IN A POND (Aesop Fable)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. The frogs have a wedding and plenty of fun on the lily pads. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MANY A SLIP—*RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. Chic Sale repeats his characterization of the shiftless brother who makes so much trouble but finally makes things right. Such a true picture of a certain type of Yankee that it is often more annoying than amusing. *Family audience.*

MEDBURY IN BORNEO (Travelaugh)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. An expedition to Borneo to capture the gorilla who escaped from Hollywood. Quite amusing. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MICKEY'S HELPING HAND—*RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. Mickey's Gang contrive a Christmas party for some poor children. A new boy in the role of Mickey McGuire makes the comedies better than they used to be. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MICKEY'S SIDE LINE—*RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. A tough boy named Percy makes trouble in Mickey's gang until James J. Jeffries (himself) shows Mickey how to win in a boxing contest. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL No. 4—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Coral reef building; how marionettes are worked; Anne Leaf at the organ. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PISCATORIAL PLEASURES—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. A fishing trip off the coast of California with scenes of catching shark and other large fish which are both interesting and educational. *Family audience.*

READIN' AND WRITIN'—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 reels. An amusing comedy of Hal Roach's Rascals on the opening day of school. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE ROAD TO ROMANCE—*Educational*, 1 reel. A trip to the picturesque mountains of the Southwest, done in color. *Family audience.*

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NOS. 2-3—*Columbia*, 1 reel each. Interesting intimate and social views of Hollywood people. *Family audience.*

SCREEN SOUVENIRS NOS. 4-5—*Paramount*, 1 reel each. Films of yesteryear—including shots of Hotel Astor in the gay 90's—Roosevelt's first airplane ride—Paris exposition in 1900, etc. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SHOPPING WITH WIFIE—*Educational*, 2 reels. Amusing and not too far-fetched comedy about a fishing trip that was delayed too long. *Family audience.*

SOCCER—*Universal*, 1 reel. "Pop" Warner demonstrates the difference between football and soccer by the use of slow motion. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SOLDIERS OF MISFORTUNE—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Eddie Buzzell tells another bed-time story for grown-ups—very funny for those who do not dislike puns. The puns are good ones and so is the nonsense. *Family audience.*

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 15—*Universal*, 1 reel. A Finnish sailor shows how the miniature ships are put in bottles; microscopic views of a frog; California, the only state where abalone is eaten. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SUMMER TIME (Terrytoons)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Lively doings on a railroad and at a summer resort. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

TED HUSING'S SPORTSLANTS NO. 3—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Good bits about cricket, sailing and polo. *Family audience.*

THE TOY PARADE—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 3 reels. A fantasy of toyland, with animated figures doing amazing things after the fashion of the old French trick films. Very good of its kind. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

TRADER HOUND—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 reels. One of the dog comedies burlesquing "Trader Horn." Amusing. *Family audience.*

TRICK PLAYS—*Universal*, 1 reel. Showing trick plays in football that have been ruled out with "Pop" Warner and his team showing some that are in order. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

UNCROWNED CHAMPIONS (Sportlight Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Grantland Rice pictures experts at fly-casting, revolver shooting, moose calling and bowling. *Family audience.*

THE VELDT—*Educational*, 1 reel. Natural history in the African veldt—interestingly instructive. *Family audience.*

THE VILLAGE SPECIALIST (Cartoon)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. Flip, the Frog, as a plumber. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

VOICE OF HOLLYWOOD NOS. 8559-60—*Tiffany*, 1 reel each. Andy Clyde announces for the first, Marjory White for the last. *Family audience.*

THE German film industry will do its bit by the unemployed this winter by giving them free tickets to performances which have not been sold out. The theory is that the jobless will be kept a little more content thereby and will be less inclined to spend the dole for beer or other non-essentials. About 60,000 tickets a month will be available.

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The purposes of the Better Films Committees affiliated with the Better Films National Council are:

To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

The Better Films National Council as an aid in carrying out these purposes furnishes an information service through its various publications.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. VII, No. 1



Helen Hayes and Ronald Colman in "Arrowsmith" (see page 10)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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Cleveland Cinema Club

Our *Who's Who* has brought to you members of our *Executive Committee* and more recently members in the field beginning with those who have been affiliated for many years with the *National Board*. When the subject was discussed of introducing to you the leader in the *Cleveland* group it became a difficult matter, for this group in its fifteen years of existence has had many outstanding leaders, so we decided rather to present a history of the club bringing in personalities from the first president to the present one. The story, sent to us by Mrs. Amy Louise Weber, the *Club Bulletin* Editor, we are pleased to publish as that of a fine pioneer group, dating from the early days of the better films movement.—THE EDITOR.



Mrs. Walter V. Magee
President, Cleveland Cinema Club

of a study group and caused a general survey of motion pictures to be made. Conferences were held with people interested in better films from time to time. An experiment in special programs offered on Friday evenings climaxed in a meeting in the library of the Chamber of Commerce attended by representative members of other clubs. A report outlining the Better Films policy was discussed and approved. This original civic committee conducted the motion picture work until 1917 when the *Cleveland Cinema Club* was organized to continue the work as above outlined and it became in that year one of the first affiliated committees of the *National Board of Review*.

“WHY does censorship not improve motion pictures?” asked by an interested school teacher in *Cleveland* in 1915 lead to the formation

Mrs. Clara Wood Derr was the first president of the Club. During the war the Club participated in the four minute speaking programs given in the motion picture theatres and supported the national effort to use pictures to maintain the

country's morale. Between 1916 and 1920 a survey of the theatres was made by the Cleveland Foundation. When the recreation council was formed it was said, "If the Cleveland Cinema Club had not existed it would have been necessary to have organized a department to do that very kind of work." Men of the Federated Churches watched the enforcement of censorship eliminations with great interest. Then they began to do something to improve the theatres, especially those theatres in outlying neighborhoods. The police were asked to enforce lighting, sanitary and fire laws. The Cinema Club appealed to the Advertising Club, Chamber of Commerce and the Better Business Bureau for their aid in this very important work. There was a membership of three hundred. Many of these members were executives in other organizations. A speakers' bureau was established and members of the Cleveland Cinema Club gave talks to other clubs about the motion picture work. Friendly conference relations were maintained with the exchange managers and the leaders of the Theatre Owners Association. The work of reviewing was done in connection with the exchanges as they were desirous of obtaining the club's publicity work in the newspapers.

The Cinema Club work in Cleveland antedated by five years the motion picture standing committee work of the Parent-Teacher Association, Federation of Women's Clubs and the Catholic Alumnae. The W. C. T. U. and the Congress of Mothers cooperated with the Club from the beginning. After 1920 cooperation with the two first named groups was planned; the Federation Committee to conduct the art study and help develop the cultural appreciation of pictures and the Parent-Teacher Association to do local work in cooperation with the theatre committees.

Mrs. Clara Wood Derr, Miss Bertelle M. Lytle, Mrs. A. S. Dale, Mrs. Thomas Wood, Mrs. O. J. Gurwell, and Mrs. R. F. Moyer were the pioneers in the movement

for better films and the maintaining of the family standard which the theatre owners were encouraged to use as part of the theatre policy in planning their programs. The Club pays tribute to its patient, plodding pilots who steered the ship through troubled uncharted waters, encountering rocks and shoals, but always righting the ship in the face of fierce winds, making new maps, marking the channel and sailing for that happy harbor of fine ideals.

And the present officers carry forward in the same spirit. Our president, Mrs. Walter V. Magee is a person of great executive ability. She has visions of the future with the educational picture coming to the front and taking its rightful place in the motion picture world. Before Mrs. Magee was elected president she had acted as secretary and she was in a position, through that experience, to know where the weak spots of the Club were. The work of the Club has progressed steadily under her guiding hand. Her committees cooperate with her and respect her judgment. She has devoted her entire time to this project and believes in the wholesome picture for the family with all her heart.

Mrs. W. J. MacLachlan has charge of the publicity department for the Cleveland Cinema Club. The Club is very fortunate in having the excellent cooperation of the "Plain Dealer" and the "News" of Cleveland. The "Cleveland Town Tidings" has carried news of the Club work to its readers. Mrs. MacLachlan has not only been indefatigable in the publicity department but she has been made general chairman of motion pictures at the Warrenville Correction Farm. Her big job is to select pictures for the inmates of the workhouse. One can readily understand the importance of making selections for this special audience. The pictures are enjoyed immensely by both the men and women inmates. The Cleveland Cinema Club has sown another seed here.

Mrs. Karl Bender is chairman of review. Each member of the committee is assigned a

down-town theatre. She reviews pictures and sends in a written report stating what kind of a picture it is and for what purpose it can best be used. The story, production values and photography are all taken into consideration for analysis. The policy of the Cleveland Cinema Club is to recommend pictures of the *family standard*. The latest decision of the Club is that where a picture for the mature audience is recommended as exceptional by the National Board of Review it must be passed by the Executive Board of the Cleveland Cinema Club before it may be printed as recommended by the Club.

Up to the year 1923 the Club issued a mimeographed bulletin which listed motion pictures for the bulletin boards controlled by our members and churches. The Cleveland Public Library has taken a great interest in placing the Cinema Club Bulletin on its board and sending it out to all branch libraries. The Library plays a very important part in the motion picture work of this city. It issues ten thousand motion picture book-marks each week. It prints the name of the picture on the book-mark and a list of books suggested by it. The Library displays many "stills" throughout the various departments and these never fail to arouse interest in the particular picture on display. Miss Linda Eastman, Librarian, said, "I joined the Cleveland Cinema Club because I believed in its ideals. I want the people in Cleveland to have the best motion pictures." The Cleveland Public Library has a right to be proud of its achievements in spreading the news of the fine things in the movie world. With the first edition of the printed bulletin our heading made its debut as follows: "This Club was organized in 1916 to study the art of the Motion Picture and its educational and moral effect, and to promote its best development. Member of the Better Films National Council, 70 Fifth Ave., New York City—Dues \$2.00 annually, including the National Board of Review Magazine." Miss Bertelle Lytle was the editor for a number

of years. At one time the Bulletin was printed on dark blue paper and was later changed to the present yellow. Mrs. Amy Louise Weber became the bulletin editor in 1929. The policy has been to carry news of general interest to all those interested in better films. The Cleveland Cinema Club Bulletin has reached every club president in Cleveland, Parent-Teacher groups, city officials, state senators, business men and college professors. It has traveled to South Africa, the West Indies, Trinidad, Port of Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, Germany, England, Scotland and Ireland as well as from one end to the other of the United States.

THE Reverend Mr. Randolph F. Blackford, a clergyman of Leesville, Florida, having observed much in the press about the iniquities of the motion picture, set out this past summer to do some first hand scientific research. That decision alone sets him apart from many of the critics of the motion picture, who are in the main all too ready to pass judgment on the basis of somebody else's synopsis. Rev. Mr. Blackford for three months made it his business to see every picture exhibited in his town. He took them "mine run" as they came to Leesville. In a letter to "The Living Church," a leading Episcopalian organ published in Milwaukee, he reports that he found in three months of picture going, just three minutes of screen time, measured by his watch, of material in which he might have found objection. Interested further, he took a look into the juvenile delinquency situation, keeping careful tabulation on boys and girls who came into conflict with the law he found that the lawbreakers in every case practically never went to the movies, i.e., went less than once a month. The picture crowd kept out of mischief. Rev. Blackford is to be praised for his determination to have the facts in the case and not to be willing to let the motion picture be unduly blamed.

Applied Advertising

By S. CHARLES EINFELD

Director of Advertising and Publicity, Warner Brothers Pictures, Inc.

Questions come to us continually regarding motion picture advertising—why is it this and why is it that—for a satisfactory answer to these questions we have gone to an authority and are pleased to present it here as given to us by Mr. Einfeld from his wide experience.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

MOTION picture advertising is a business in a class by itself. It has its own rules, its own necessities and expedients. If anyone wants to maintain that the general principles of advertising, as developed in recent years, apply to the motion picture field, I should be the last to deny it. But principles by themselves are impotent; they are almost meaningless. To become effective they must be applied; and it is in the *application* that the business of advertising films becomes a thing apart.

Various criticisms are made from time to time of the manner in which motion pictures are presented and described to the public. We who are responsible are accused of exaggeration, sensationalism, even occasionally of misrepresentation. In certain cases it may well be that these accusations are true. As regards deliberate misrepresentation, however, I can quite honestly say that I believe it to be very rare indeed. The motion picture industry today is conducted on reputable and intelligent lines; and to misrepresent the article that

one is selling is neither honest nor intelligent. To put it on the lowest ground, it is the worst policy in the world; and those particular chickens always come home to roost very quickly.

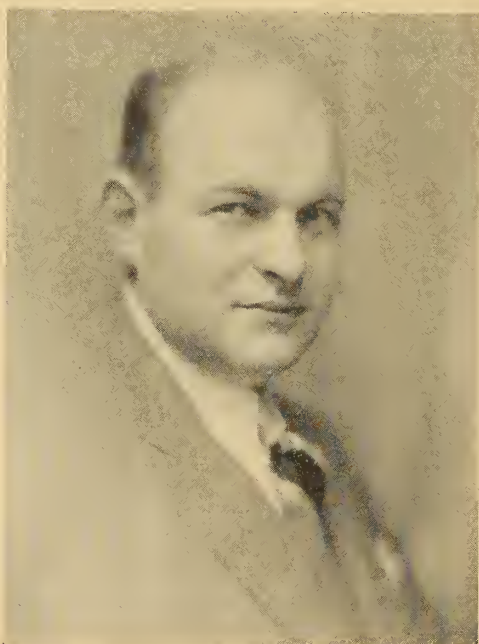
So I think we can rule misrepresentation out. It occurs so seldom that it can be considered quite negligible. With regard to exaggeration and sensationalism, however, there is a strong case to be met, and I shall

endeavor to do so frankly and without reserve.

First of all, let me admit that I personally am a confirmed believer in the virtues of understatement—as a general proposition. Flights into the superlative leave me cold, as doubtless they leave you, reader. "Such-and-Such is a good picture" seems to me a much more effective statement than "Such-and-Such is the most tremendous, thrilling, soul-stirring, crowd-compelling epic to which the modern screen has yet given birth."

That is, it is much more effective with me and with you, reader. But what about other people? What about most people? Why is it that the successful politician goes in for oratory—for what Huxley called "that pestilent jade Rhetoric?"

There is a saying of Thoreau's, I think, which applies to the present discussion. "It takes two to speak the truth—one to speak and one to hear." If I tell you the truth in



S. Charles Einfeld

a manner that fails to bring home to you the fullest degree of truth that is in my mind, then I might as well not tell you the truth at all, except for the sake of my own conscience. If by raising my voice, by employing an adjective or two, I can make you realize the essential verity of what I am attempting to impart, then that surely is the wise and altogether justifiable thing to do. For in such a procedure I am not departing from the truth; I am simply presenting it in the garments whose colors will strike your eye most effectively. I may think the combination of hues is a bit too garish. So, perhaps, may you. But if Jones and Smith and Brown in their millions can only be reached by those colors—well, I submit the problem to you.

By all this, however, I am not seeking to defend all that is done in advertising motion pictures today. Are we sensational? Do we exaggerate? Yes, we sometimes are and we sometimes do. When you and I are in an assemblage of people with loud voices, it is difficult to avoid raising our own tones above our wonted well-bred level. And the motion picture business is highly competitive. The other companies know that Smith and Jones and Brown can be reached by the use of adjectives, so they are using adjectives; and we, in advertising our picture, must use them too, lest our choicest remarks be drowned in the swelling chorus.

In selling a picture, it is not generally realized, one is selling a highly perishable article. From the first performance, people must go into the theatre and buy tickets, or the picture will quickly be withdrawn, a total loss to all concerned. Hence the public must be made aware, as soon and as vividly as possible, of the merits of our picture. This leads directly to a temptation to exaggerate. From time to time we yield to it and are sensational.

This is regrettable. I offer no excuses for it. But I do wish to point out earnestly that the sensationalism and the exaggeration complained of are in nearly every case quite

honest. When we know that we have a good picture, and that Smith and Jones and Brown must be convinced that it is a good picture too, and that the adjective "great" means more to them than the adjective "good"—well, once more I submit the problem to you.

Of one thing I am very sure. The methods of motion picture advertising are improving as the pictures themselves are improving. The screen is considered by many authorities to be the greatest means of education in our modern world. Mr. George Arliss not long ago told the writer that he believes in talking pictures, and has devoted himself to them, mainly because "they have brought literature to the screen."

Well, good literature is not sensational or exaggerated; it prefers to hold its superlatives in reserve for the rare occasions when they are fully warranted. As Smith and Jones and Brown are educated in a sound taste they will perhaps begin to share the fastidious preference in these matters which now belongs to you, reader, and to me. And when this education is complete there will be no reason for raising our voices to call attention to our pictures.

Until that happy day, try to be patient and to remember that, after all, pictures have to be sold to a tremendous number of people if we are to go on making them at all. But I look forward to the time when Smith will say to Jones: "That's a good picture at the So-and-So Theatre."

"Is it really good?" Jones will reply.

"Yes, it's really good."

And then Jones and Brown and Cohen and O'Reilly and the rest will rush in their thousands into the cinema house.

But that day is still a long way off.



Cinema for the Juvenile Mind

By ERIC M. KNIGHT

There are endless facets to the discussion of the motion picture but none of more interest to Motion Picture Study Clubs and Better Films Councils than that of the motion picture and the child. While this phase of the motion picture is by no means neglected it does not often receive the special attention of motion picture critics so when it does what one has to say seems quite worth reprinting. And particularly when the comments contain so much of sympathetic understanding of child reactions as that shown recently by Mr. Knight, film critic of the Philadelphia Public Ledger, in an article in his department from which we are pleased to quote at length.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

ORDINARILY the topic of child films never worries the film critic. But I am aware of a tremendous activity in this direction. At women's clubs there is one invariable question: "What can we do to get better films for children?"

The whole catch in the matter lies in that phrase "better films." What are "better films for children"? That has to be decided before any concerted movement can be made by the mothers.

To this time mothers have sought to cooperate with theatre managers in reference to Saturday matinees. It has not always been successful. The clubwomen charge that at some houses films entirely unfit for children are presented. The theatre managers declare simply, with some justice, that they are in the business to make a theatre pay its way and that is all there is to it.

Personally, I think both sides often argue from the wrong angle. The mothers would like to avoid gangster films, exciting dramas of war and violence, and plots that have strong emphasis on sex situations. They would like to have historical dramas, fairy tales, presentations of the classics, and good adventure stories.

The poor theatre manager cannot show such features even to please his neighborhood public because the movie companies do not make them. The movie makers, in turn, declare that they cannot make them because they cannot afford to make them—they cannot get enough income from such pictures to pay the cost of production. And here we are stumped. It is a question how far we can ask a movie maker to lose money just to please us. Critical as I am of the industry, I can never ask movie makers to be bad business men.

Yet I do not think the case is hopeless altogether. I think the whole answer to this child-film business, lies not in a study of parental wishes, of exhibitor's troubles or of maker's beliefs. We must go to the source and study the child himself.

The child in general is an amazing creature. He is quick to discern, easily adaptable, and far keener than we give him credit for. In his taste for motion pictures I have found him possessing a critical faculty quite equal to that of grown-ups. And he goes with almost unerring instinct to the picture that best utilizes the powers of cinema.

He is the first to recognize when he is being talked down to, and (as movie makers know) he is not going to the pictures that "are good for him" if they are not good from his point of view. He is suspicious of patronage, and will not fall for the namby-pamby stuff that lots of parents would have in his screen diet. The child, most amazingly, wants adult stuff in cinema and scorns films that are wishy-washy.

It is not hard to remember my own childhood's viewpoint. Books at that time were equivalent to our fiction via the screen. Urged to read Christmas gift tomes I sneaked off to penny dreadfuls. I still have some of the early volumes. In a moment of mad cataloguing I came across "Buy Your Own Cherries," (an argument against strong

drink) and "Eric, or Little by Little," (which made me expend many childhood tears wishing my own first name had been Jack or Bill or something equally manly). As I glanced through these samples of juvenile literary fare I came to the conclusion that I had not been such a dull child when I forsook them for "Silvershot of the Western Plains," "On Hounslow Heath with Dick Turpin" and all the rest.

I do not mean that the diet was good for me especially. It did no particular harm except that I regret now the waste of time. There is so much to read in the world—even the most prolific consumer of books finds himself admitting blankly his ignorance of an author while people look at him in surprise. "You mean you have not read Ozzip Gloobyzychick?" they echo. "Oh, you must!"

But no, I spent precious hours consuming riotous tales in which "Stand and Deliver!" and "another redskin bit the dust" were phrases to be taken seriously—and continued to do so until by mischance I discovered that "Don Quixote" was just as exciting and far more original. And then it was not long before the search for another Cervantes led to Borrow and Swift and Kingsley and Stevenson and Defoe. They were better than "Nick Carter" and even more enthralling.

It is much the same with the child of today. I have listened to boys talk of the cinema—talk, that is, when they are not under the repressing eye of a parent. And I know what they talk of. They talk of football thrillers and Westerns and gang features. They speak of vivid serial affairs whose names I hardly know. They patter glibly of Buck Jones and Hoot Gibson and movie actors whose faces seldom, if ever, reach the august first-run theatres at which I put in critical appearance. In fact, I have only to hear a gang of boys talk to realize that I do not know the half of it when it comes to movies.

This much is sure, children like excitement in their movies—whether it is in a sports climax, a prison escape or a gang killing. And there is the answer to it all.

When the movie makers will make films that are fit for children and yet which have that desired element of dramatic punch we shall have the problem solved. To this date I do not think the makers have half tried. When they make a child film they immediately assume that the child has no intelligence—while, as a matter of fact, he is about the quickest-witted movie goer there is.

Child films have failed to make money because they have been even less acceptable to the child than the average adult film. They have talked down to the audience and the child resents it.

Make films of American history, semi-fictional if you wish; make stories of adventure, real ones if you care to; make stories of sporting heroes, football, track; build fantasies of ingenuity; put all the action and powerful camera work and vivid direction that went into such affairs as *Little Caesar* and *The Last Parade*; get actors that are as able and appealing as Robinson and Cagney—and your problem is over. House managers will not have to worry about where the audiences will come from. They will be wondering how so many children are going to get into the matinee.

The final test of a child film is: "Would you want to sit through it yourself?" On this basis I can give you plenty of good films that were ideal child pictures. The old silent days gave us *Robin Hood*, *The Thief of Bagdad* and *The Lost World*. In these talkie days we have *Touchdown*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Skippy*, *Huckleberry Finn* and similar pieces of work.

But, you may protest, those films had stars like Douglas Fairbanks, Jackie Cooper, Lewis Stone and Wallace Beery. They were expensive films made for adult minds.

And I answer that is what children want. They want the best actors, the biggest stars, the most vivid portrayals.

When the managers secure films such as these I think the mothers must accept them in a spirit of compromise and do all they can to aid the neighborhood manager. When

(continued on page 19)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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JOHN ALFRED THOMAS

Arrowsmith

Adapted from the novel of Sinclair Lewis by Sidney Howard, directed by John Ford, photographed by Ray June, produced by Samuel Goldwyn, distributed by United Artists.

The Cast

<i>Martin Arrowsmith</i>	<i>Ronald Colman</i>
<i>Leora Tozer</i>	<i>Helen Hayes</i>
<i>Sondelius</i>	<i>Richard Bennett</i>
<i>Professor Max Gottlieb</i>	<i>A. E. Anson</i>
<i>Dr. Tubbs</i>	<i>Claude King</i>
<i>Dr. Terry Wickett</i>	<i>Russell Hopton</i>
<i>Henry Novak</i>	<i>John M. Qualen</i>
<i>Mrs. Novak</i>	<i>Adele Watson</i>
<i>State Veterinarian</i>	<i>David Landau</i>
<i>Joyce Lanyon</i>	<i>Myrna Loy</i>
<i>Oliver Marchand</i>	<i>Clarence Brooks</i>

WHILE cinematic quality is one of the most important tests, if not the most important, that can be applied to a moving picture, the increasing filming of well known novels has made it necessary that such a picture be judged also by the fidelity and intelligence with which the spirit of the novel is presented. Unfortunately, too often of late, the novel picturized has been used only as a springboard for the imagination, or lack of it, of the producer, and bears little relation to the original except in title and the names of the characters.

A pleasing exception is the Samuel Goldwyn production of *Arrowsmith*, by the recent Nobel Prize winner, Sinclair Lewis. While from the limitation of time, many parts of the novel have had to be omitted, the picture has been unified and given

significance by emphasizing the theme of a scientist's devotion to his work. It is an adequate and satisfying translation of the written word into the speech of the screen. Sidney Howard, the playwright, has written the adaptation, and John Ford is responsible for the understanding presentation.

The plot of this former best seller is too well known to need recounting. The film opens with young Arrowsmith, the budding young doctor and embryo scientist having to make his choice between his scientific work and the girl he loves. He chooses the girl and goes to her home town to practice as a country doctor. There, even amid the many calls to act as a dentist to a little six-year-old and cure the numerous ills of a rural community, he finds time to experiment with a serum for an epidemic among the cattle. The State Veterinarian resents his efforts, but he perseveres and sends the triumphant results of his experiment to Washington. He is called to a great medical foundation in New York.

There he works under his old professor and comes up against the deadening routine and the need for immediate results, as a means of advertising the Foundation, that seems to characterize such institutions. After two years he has nothing to show. This sequence is beautifully presented, stressing the idea that he is so wrapped up in his laboratory work that he neglects his long suffering and devoted wife, Leora. At last he

BULLETIN

THIS MONTH
Honorable Mention

Arrowsmith
Elisabeth von
Oesterreich

discovers a powerful germ-killer only to learn that it had been discovered some months before by an European scientist. His great opportunity comes when the bubonic plague breaks out in the West Indies and he volunteers to go and combat it with his new germ-killer. His wife insists upon accompanying him. He leaves her safe, as he thinks, at Black Water, and goes to a smaller island where the plague is raging more fiercely.

There are tense scenes between him and the Governor General, for science demands that only part of the inhabitants be inoculated so that a "control group" can be kept to prove whether the inoculations are efficacious. The growing panic of the inhabitants is most adequately and effectively portrayed without undue stressing of the horrors. The scientist in him breaks before the demands of suffering humanity, and he gives a general inoculation. So too the scenes in which the cigarette, on which some of the deadly bubonic virus has been spilled, is smoked by Leora and her sad and lonely death, deserted by her panic-stricken servants, are portrayed with restraint and a fine artistic sense. The last scene where Arrowsmith returns to New York and cuts off from the Foundation in his determination to pursue science unhampered is also portrayed with a dignity unusual upon the screen.

There are times when the rapidity of the sequences are almost too fast for easy comprehension and mar an otherwise unusually well done picture. The actors move among the complicated instruments of a modern laboratory as if they really were accustomed to them and knew what to do with them, not playing at it. A laboratory is not usually a place of beauty to the layman, but Mr. Ford gives us many beautiful shots that linger in the memory. The scenes in the West Indies, a place that always lends itself to picturesque presentation, while beautiful and arresting, are never allowed to overbalance the others.

The work of Ronald Colman as the young scientist and Helen Hayes as his wife stands

out as thoroughly believable. Richard Bennett as the Swede Sondelius, A. E. Anson as Prof. Max Gottlieb and Claude King as the irritating Dr. Tubbs of the Foundation add immensely to the careful balancing of the presentation and help to give an unusual air of verisimilitude.

It is one of the few pictures of the year that presages the time when our American scenes will receive the interpretative handling that distinguishes the best European films.—L. W. H.

Elisabeth von Oesterreich

(Der Leidensweg einer Frau)

Adapted from historical sources by G. C. Klaren, A. Lantz and A. Schirokauer, directed by Adolf Trotz, photographed by Frederik Fuglsang, released by Tobis Forenfilms, Inc.

The Cast

<i>Elisabeth of Austria</i>	<i>Lil Dagover</i>
<i>Fanny Angerer</i>	<i>Maria Solveg</i>
<i>Emperor Franz Josef</i>	<i>Paul Otto</i>
<i>Crown Prince Rudolf</i>	<i>Ekkehard Arend</i>
<i>Crown Princess Stefanie</i>	<i>Gert Pilyry</i>
<i>Mary Vetsera</i>	<i>Charlotte Ander</i>
<i>Archduchess Sophie</i>	<i>Ida Perry</i>
<i>Bratfisch</i>	<i>Ludwig Stoessel</i>
<i>Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria</i>	<i>Sergius Sav</i>

QUITE young people can remember the last Franz Josef of Austria, that bent and broken but still stubborn old man who lived to see his empire headed for destruction in the Great War before he went to his place in the tomb where his tragic family slept. People not very old can remember his Empress, and the newspaper pictures of her, still raven-haired and beautiful, when a fanatic killed her in Geneva. And yet this imperial couple, and their times, already seem very long ago, of an age so different from ours that to think of it as so near as it is, is difficult.

The motion picture that has been made of Elisabeth's life and death is like far-away history, though if Crown Prince Rudolf had not met such an early and sudden death he



Lil Dagover as the Empress and Ekkehard Arend as the Crown Prince in the German historical film, "Elisabeth von Oesterreich"

might easily be consorting this very day with the other exiled monarchs whom the war drove from their thrones. This effect of distance in time is increased by a slightly old-fashioned style in directing the picture, a style that is aptly suited to the temper and manners of the days with which it deals. Advanced cinematic methods would have served less effectively, no doubt, in re-creating the graceful stolidity and stiff refinement of the Austrian court and its dominating spirit.

The picture is episodic—apparently historical pictures that cover a stretch of years have to be. But with its leisurely pace this particular picture has not time enough to cover many episodes so it has to jump every now and then—one can roughly time the passing of years by Franz Josef's make-up: more lines in the face and more gray in the hair denote time lapses. The alternative title

of the picture—*Der Leidensweg einer Frau*—supplies the key to the underlying motif that determined what episodes should be selected: we are to be shown how being an Empress made Elizabeth suffer with special pain from the things that would make a vital, life-loving woman suffer most. There is first the rigid repression of all her youthful pleasures, the loss of the gay friends who made merry her girlhood days as a Bavarian princess, and who can have no place in her life as a Kaiserin. Then her child is taken from her, to be brought up according to the court rules for the heir, away from any danger of being coddled by a fond mother. Her cousin, Ludwig of Bavaria, comes back into her life and an old romance is rekindled—but that has to be sacrificed, and later her old lover kills himself. We can only guess at the years of loneliness between these peaks

of suffering, which culminate in the double suicide of Crown Prince Rudolf and Mary Vetsera. After that the assassination in Geneva seems more like a release than a tragedy.

For all its woes the picture is not depressing. It is full of charm—the charm of lovely settings, of characters nicely realized—and a lofty kind of spirit that keeps suffering from degenerating into whining and futile misery. The market women, growing from young girls to age and with the gossip of the palace affairs serving as a sort of Greek chorus, keep a strain of common human living running through the story that not only holds it together but gives it sympathetic warmth.

Photographically the picture is as beautiful as could well be, and it has the added value of having been photographed in the actual places where Elizabeth lived her life. The acting is of an unusually high order. Particularly is Lil Dagover effective as the Empress. Her beauty is strikingly like that in the photographs of the real Empress, and she embodies all the qualities of vividness and passion and courage one looks for in a portrayal of that unfortunate and glamorous queen who became a legend of cruel fatality even before she died.—J. S. H.

“**M**OLIERE, Music and the Film” was the subject of a lecture delivered by Leon Vallas, Litt. D., Harvard professor of French origin, who addressed the first meeting of l’Alliance Francaise in Lowell, Massachusetts.

Professor Vallas attempted to show the relation of all three, and said that the form employed in the early American talking picture was astonishingly similar to that used by the French playwright, Jean Moliere. He pointed out that Moliere, who lived in the 17th century and is regarded as one of the greatest writers of comedies, was a producer as well as a writer. This had the

effect of influencing his style considerably. Knowing the wants of his audiences, he introduced into many of his pieces passages that were somewhat indicative of the popular morals and tendencies of the time in order to make his plays financially successful.

Living in a century of intense musical activity, Moliere introduced music into his plays. “Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme”, one of his best known works, contained a large number of musical scenes.

Moliere was also a capable singer, actor and dancer, and frequently appeared in his own plays. In these qualities he somewhat resembled the French actor, Maurice Chevalier, although he possessed in addition great literary genius. King Louis XIV, young and very active, frequently danced in Moliere’s comedies, and often commanded the author to introduce special music and dancing scenes in his plays. In Moliere’s time great human sentiments had not been translated in music. Moliere was the creator of the French opera and his name figures in every history of music.

Although the connection between Moliere and the film appears remote at first thought, Professor Vallas said that he found a great resemblance between Moliere’s methods and those used in films and stage representations. There is a certain analogy since both Moliere’s and the modern entertainment contains two major elements: voice and music. The changes of scene made with great speed in the modern film are also related to the swift transportation of location which was common in Moliere’s works.

Until now we have remained in the domain of reality and have about exhausted its possibilities. The domain opened by imagination offers much unexplored and vastly promising material. If Moliere were alive today, he would use the almost unlimited resources at his hands to rise to greater heights in cinematic art.



BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

DURING a discussion in our office among several people a few days ago one asked the question about the most effective way of doing a certain thing in regard to Better Films work and another answered, "Get it in the newspapers." From the clippings sent to us by the president of the Rochester (N. Y.) Better Films Council as a report on its activities we might say that she has certainly succeeded along this line.

A leading story in the Theatre column of an issue of the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle before a special benefit showing of the Council, stated so clearly the aims and activities of this Council that we are quoting from it as follows: "One of the most important cultural activities in Rochester is that of the Better Films Council which is affiliated with the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures of New York City. The local organization was formed a little more than a year ago, and there have been evidences that it has accomplished work of real value.

"Mrs. Hugh Smith, Jr., promoted the establishment of the Council, and her continual effort, tact and excellent judgment have been chiefly instrumental in maintaining its vitality. To her belongs the big share of credit for its functioning as effectively as it has.

"The Council's aim is, as has been said often, to develop wider appreciation of the better pictures and thus make it more profitable to produce and distribute them. It holds the conviction that creators of photoplays are willing to make higher grade films generally if the public will show a profitable liking, even better, a preference, for them. As audiences must be developed for the better pictures first, the Council feels that local organizations like itself can do valuable work in this respect. And are doing it.

"It is doing, among other things, one concrete service to the public, by publishing

on Friday of each week in the Democrat and Chronicle and the Times-Union a guide to the new pictures offered by the theatres. This guide indicates the suitability of films for children, or for the entire family, and in the brief introduction it is explained that, although it is known that some of them will not please all tastes, they are recommended as having some merit as entertainment.

"At a glance the reader of the guide can see what the downtown theatres or his neighborhood house will exhibit during the week, and also which photoplays are the more highly recommended. The better ones in the list are announced in blacker type, and the very best are labeled 'admirable', 'excellent', or 'exceptional.' The nature of each picture and its players are set forth.

"Such a guide should be of much benefit to film patrons, especially to those who wish to spend their limited theatre time most profitably. There is evidence that its use is steadily growing. Many of the organizations represented in the Council membership post the guide on their bulletin boards each week.

"The source of the guide recommendations is the pithy, capsule reviews of pictures made by experienced reviewers of the National Board and published by it each week. The Board is a voluntary, non-commercial organization, like the Council, and it gives unbiased opinions of pictures. It keeps always in mind the fact that tastes differ, and that the 'high-brow' photoplays are not the only ones deserving of attention. The less pretentious films which are wholesome and well made of their kind it approves; a considerable number of cheap and offensive pictures it does not recommend.

"The Council, as well as the Board, is much interested in the use of pictures, both talking and silent, in schools. It is, in fact, urging the extension of this use. Through

the influence of Mrs. Smith, several members of the National Board have come to Rochester and spoken on the ever-growing cultural importance of pictures. Others will be brought here, as means to accomplish this become available."

Thirty organizations are represented on the Council which has many committees carrying on its activities, one of the newest ones being the Junior Review Committee, composed of high school students. This group meets bi-monthly, reviews a picture before the meeting, votes upon it, using a printed ballot, and discusses it. The column writer of another Rochester paper in commenting on the Junior Review Committee said, "They showed a marked tendency toward judgment of a picture on its merit rather than on its publicity or on the basis of the dazzling personality of a star or the reputation of a lauded director."

Again following the annual dinner of the Council an entire column was given to the telling of the various points of wide interest brought out by Mrs. Harry G. Grover, president of the Rutherford (N. J.) Better Films Committee, who was guest speaker.

When the Rochester Journal ran a series of articles on "Woman's important part in the development of the city," Mrs. Smith, the president of the Better Films Council was interviewed as the sixth in this series, considering how new motion pictures are in comparison with all the other activities of women, this is favored attention it seems. In this interview Mrs. Smith says, "Rochester, in surprisingly short time, became music-minded through persistent emphasis on what is best in music. I am optimistic enough to believe that in the same manner it can develop a discriminating taste in motion pictures that will make for a general high standard in presentations of our local motion picture theatres.

"The Rochester Better Films Council through its membership, contacts with different organizations. It is endeavoring to criticize films, constructively, because it knows there is room for improvement. The

number of people reached by it is large enough, in my opinion, to present a cross-section of public opinion. There seems to me to be a general desire to see and hear good films, rather than those which leave an unpleasant aftertaste.

"Probably few people know that the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, a national organization with which we are identified, operates on a non-profit basis. Scores of volunteers, many of them men and women of national prominence in literary and educational fields, give their time to review pictures before they grade them according to merit and audience suitability. It is because they are convinced that the motion picture is a force entering into our daily lives which must be directed, if it is to be a wholesome social influence, that individuals willingly give their time to the cause.

"In Rochester, managers of theatres have cooperated to a gratifying extent in listening to criticisms and in demanding from producers more of the brand of play that meets with our approval.

"There is a constant exchange of opinion on current films, between members of the Council, through a sort of 'grapevine' promotion system. Each member telephones to his or her friends recommendation of a film found worthy of support and thus secures cooperation in spreading the good news.

"Monthly meetings of the Council are devoted to educational features. For example, at a recent meeting we heard of visual instruction work in the city schools."

An editorial in one of the Rochester dailies commented as follows, "Better films. What possibilities for bringing about finer character and better living. What possibilities for using this gigantic industry, one of the three greatest influences on American life, for good, instead of for bad or indifference. What possibilities for using the screen or portraying truth—in its correct colors—instead of wasting itself in surrounding every situation, whether true or false, with a false glamour.

"For it must be admitted that the talkie,

with the exception of the newspaper, exerts the greatest influence on American life. Not even the radio can compare with it, for the visual contact is still an important one with those who are too prone to accept their standards from sources outside their own reasoning.

"It is with these realizations in mind that we pay our respect to the work being carried on by the Rochester Better Films Council. Recommending films for an individual or for a family is a difficult task. Criticizing constructively for the benefit of future productions is an added difficulty.

"There can be no absolute rules to govern human conduct. Just so must all criticism and suggestion for all moving pictures be relative. There is the diversity of ages, mental ability, and class of audiences to consider. There is always the problem of moral teaching versus entertainment.

"It is fortunate, then, that Rochester enjoys the advantages of such a discriminating group. With their task but little outlined, with absolute demarcation almost impossible, it is to their credit that they firmly advance their choice of what is worth while in screen literature. Let us hope that they continue to make their discrimination felt in the choice of pictures, that they may be able to bring about new standards in motion pictures."

HOW many different organizations there are interested in special motion picture programs for children, even if there is no organized Community Better Films Council—Women's Clubs, Mother's Clubs, Parent-Teacher Associations, and many others. An organization which has recently written to us of their plan for Saturday morning movies for children is the Junior Auxiliary of the Visiting Nurse Association of Davenport, Iowa. They say that they are able to secure the local Capital Theatre and are now planning programs.

THE purposes of the Cincinnati (Ohio) Better Motion Picture Council as recently stated are given below as carrying suggestions to other better films groups. This does not mean that the Council is in any sense a recent one, on the other hand it is one of the pioneer groups, planning to celebrate its tenth anniversary on January 25th. But the statement of purposes was part of a lengthy article written by the motion picture critic of one of the important local dailies after a talk before the Council this winter.

He says, "From the constitution of the organization we learn that the purpose of the Council is to 'unite all individuals and groups interested in the bettering of motion pictures for mutual benefit and helpfulness.

To select and support pictures especially suitable for boys and girls and families;

To encourage the production and distribution of films that have distinct social value and to promote clean, wholesome, artistic films;

To disseminate information concerning releases in order that the public may exercise an intelligent selection of entertainment;

To encourage the use of photoplays in institutions as a means of spreading light, knowledge, happiness and health."

It is to be learned from this same constitution that the formation of the Council's membership 'shall be by individual representatives of various local civic, religious, educational and welfare organizations, and also by interested individual citizens.'

In the by-laws the scope of the activities of the Council is gathered from the list of standing committees—"Reviewing, in charge of reviewing pictures and all matters of endorsement of films; Selected Performances, in charge of boys' and girls' matinees, family nights and special performances; Visual Education, in charge of all activities looking to the use of motion pictures in the schools and community institutions; Program and Speakers' bureau, in charge of arranging programs and supplying speakers; Music, to foster a high standard of musical program in connection with the presentation of films;

Law, in charge of legislative matters'."

At an early fall meeting of the Council a point considered was that the Council use its influence with local houses, particularly in the suburbs, encouraging them to show pictures especially suitable for children on week-ends so that children can attend, as they have been trained to "no movies on Sunday and no movies on school nights." At this meeting reports of activity were made by the chairmen of the following Committees: Program, Selected Performances, Visual Education, Music and Reviewing.

IN her report given at the annual meeting of the New York State Parent-Teacher Association, Mrs. R. R. Purcell, the Motion Picture Chairman, made in addition to a pithy statement of accomplishments a statement of purposes for coming activity so in line with the National Board's objectives of study, information and discrimination that we are pleased to reprint from it here:

"During the past year there has been a very marked increase in interest in motion pictures among the Parent-Teacher units in our state. We are very rapidly awakening to our responsibilities along this line and there have been many requests for literature and help of various sorts on this subject.

A large proportion of these requests were for assistance in preparing talks to be given before various organizations, which meant that the help rendered reached many individuals. Herein lies the greatest responsibility of the P.-T.A. We must educate our organizations collectively, and our members individually, in their need for knowledge of motion pictures first, and then the application of this knowledge in the community, through publicity, special performances, and so forth.

The aforementioned increase in interest has been most gratifying, and if it continues in the proportion of the past year, we shall soon have our P.-T.A. units 'motion picture conscious' to the extent that we shall realize that it is solely a family responsibility

as to what pictures a child shall or shall not see. We cannot transfer that responsibility to the school, the church or the state.

So let our program be first, education of our members; second, publicity and recommendation of the good pictures, including commendation of the theatre management when the program is good; then, if circumstances and situations warrant, special performances of selected pictures for the children of our community."

Mrs. Purcell visits many of the different associations of the state speaking to them on motion pictures and also keeps in touch with them through correspondence. One letter sent out contained interesting questionnaire material as follows:

"Is there any work for better motion pictures carried on in your town?

Does the P.-T.A. sponsor such work?

If not, do you have a representative on the Board which is sponsoring it?

What form does the work take:

1. A Photoplay Guide in the local paper?
2. A Friday evening family program?
3. A Saturday morning or afternoon matinee for children?

Have you a Chairman or Committee on Better Motion Pictures?

Does the subject of motion pictures for children appear on your yearly program?

If you have no work in connection with a theatre in your town, do you sponsor similar programs in your school?"

BOYS and girls in the seventh and eighth grades of schools all over Alabama are eligible for an essay contest sponsored by the motion picture committee of the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs. Mrs. Edgar Collins, motion picture chairman for the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs and president of the Better Films Committee of Birmingham, affiliated with the Better Films National Council of the National Board, is general chairman of the committee in charge of the contest.

The contest is designed to show the taste of Alabama boys and girls in pictures. It is expected to encourage discrimination among the boys and girls in choosing their amusements, she declared.

Prizes of \$2.50 have been offered for the best essay for each of the seven districts of the state. A grand prize of \$5.00 has been offered for the best of the district winners.

Rules of the contest were announced as follows: (a) write plainly in ink on one side of the paper; (b) theme shall not exceed 1,000 words; (c) only pupils of the seventh and eighth grades are eligible to enter the contest; (d) selection of the picture to be reviewed is left to the individual contestant; (e) all themes must be submitted by March 1, 1932; (f) prizes will be awarded as quickly as possible after the papers are submitted; (g) prizes will be \$2.50 cash for each district of the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs and a grand prize of \$5.00 for the best one of these, a total for the best of the whole state to amount to \$7.50.

THE work of community Better Films Committees should become increasingly less difficult of accomplishment and more productive of results as theatre managers are taking a greater interest in the community angle. And this they are doing, for the film companies, recognizing the value of community cooperation in building good will for the theatres, are sending out from the Home offices, to district and local theatre managers, word to give more attention to it. The Publix Corporation has issued an outline on community analysis prepared by John Barry, which has appeared in the trade publication, *Motion Picture Herald*. It contains helpful suggestions for Committees and so we are pleased to quote from it. They are ones which Committees will be glad to fall in with if undertaken by the exhibitor or ones which they themselves might suggest to him.

Here are some of the points of local interest about which the exhibitor is urged to be alert. "Local holidays and occasions; local personages prominent in the social, political, educational, religious and business activities of the community; attendance records as to stars, types of pictures, etc., principal local industries and products manufactured; advertising of local products which in turn advertise the community; is the community specialized or diversified in its industries; popularity wards and districts, number of families; tourist visitors; theatre location and accessibility; centers of population within easy travel distance of the theatre; nationality and racial facts; schools, as to location, type, school organizations, churches, as to location, type, etc.; libraries—library reports showing type of fiction preferred—magazine circulation and preference—fan magazine circulation—popularity of fiction appearing in photo-plays; musical preferences—sales at music stores—radio numbers most popular—hotel orchestra programs; newspapers—coverage—type of readers—feature and special articles—editorial policy—cooperation—amusement page—cooperative activities; clubs and societies—purpose—membership—character of activities—meeting days (include Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, commercial, civic, fraternal and social organizations, American Legion, Boy Scouts, camera clubs, dramatic societies, etc.); government—date of election—chart showing positions, names and terms of officials—functions of government that concern the theatre, such as Departments of Health, Police, Fire, License, Employment, Welfare, etc.—movements that have strong local following for general welfare rather than for partisan motives—Sunday amusements; what is done to develop child patronage—what are the possibilities for children's matinees—for Saturday morning matinees—for children's souvenir performances—for "Kiddie Clubs"—what attempt is made for programs that would be particularly pleasing to children to solicit child

patronage—are contests with school organizations conducted often enough—is the theatre popular with children—are the children admission prices correct.”

With the theatre managers giving special thought to these items Committees will no longer be met with what were formerly problems in the way of carrying forward their plans, particularly in the neighborhood houses where the theatre closely touches the life of the community.

FOR many years Mrs. Harriet Hawley Locher has in various capacities been bringing to the attention of parents and teachers the films especially suitable for children being shown in the theatres of Washington, D. C. She sends us word of the latest community tie-up along this line. Her announcement sheet says, “For the school children of Washington the manager of RKO Keith’s Theatre has arranged a Special Saturday Morning Showing of *Way Back Home*. It is a comedy drama of the simple life of Jonesport, Maine. Seth Parker says, ‘If you could bottle good wholesome laughs, they’d take the place of a good many medicines.’ That is just what *Way Back Home* contains—‘bottled laughter.’ You can carry it out of the theatre with you and find it a cure-all.

“The price of admission for all children is fifteen cents for any performance, but the advantage of this Special Saturday Morning is that there is no age limit for school children. Teachers attending with school groups will be the guests of the theatre management.

“Remember every child in Washington will enjoy and should see *Way Back Home*. The price is fifteen cents—the time for the Special Saturday Morning Showing is 9:30 a.m.”

AMONG the humanitarian efforts of theatres all over the country, those of Fox West Coast are notable. A report of a benefit clothes matinee in the Broadway Theatre in Cape Girardeau, Mo., describes the good this event did in clothing the poorer children of the town for the winter. The stunt is not a new one, food matinees have been held in many spots during the wave of unemployment. However, it serves to remind that many children do need clothing and that the Parent-Teacher Associations and other interested organizations will be duly appreciative of any help managers can give.

In Cape Girardeau, the matinee was staged with the cooperation of the Parent-Teachers Council and all of the school boards. Clothes were taken to the Central High School after the affair and were sorted. Any child needing clothing could apply at the High School and those too proud were taken care of by the truant officer, who knows the circumstances of most of the kiddies pretty well.

Cinema for the Juvenile Mind

(continued from page 9)

Huckleberry Finn and similar films come, pictures that are good entertainment for adult minds, too, the civic clubs can insure more of the type by cooperating with the exhibitor.

In return the manager or the chain theatre head owes it to the mothers to keep the involved sex plots and many of the current libido-freeing dramas from the Saturday afternoon screen.

But whatever is done, remember you do not fool the children very long. They will watch a dull program once—maybe twice. After that they are over the hills and off to the theatre that is showing something with a kick in it.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

EDITOR

JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

DEPARTMENT STAFF

JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

FRANCES C. BARRETT

HELEN CAHILL

THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIOUS INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.



THE BLOND CAPTIVE—Expedition picture with Lowell Thomas as oral narrator. Imperial, 6 reels. An expedition to find the Neanderthal man of fifty thousand years ago in Australia, and the finding of a blonde boy in a tribe of natives. An unusually interesting picture of its kind. *Family audience.*

DANCE TEAM—Adapted from a novel by Sarah Addington, directed by Sidney Lanfield, with a cast including Sally Eilers and James Dunn. Fox, 8 reels. The two stars who were so good in *Bad Girl* are here paired again, in a story with the familiar plot of a struggling dancing couple who are parted when success comes to them. The acting makes up for the triteness of the story. *Mature audience.*

***DELICIOUS**—Written by Guy Bolton, directed by David Butler, with a cast including Janet Gaynor, Charles Farrell and El Brendel. Fox, 10 reels. Poor girl, rich young man, Swedish comic, put together in a familiar pattern. There are some new Gershwin songs, and a new Gershwin rhapsody. Miss Gaynor has an occasional Scottish brogue. It is excellent fare for the whole family's sweet tooth. *Family audience.*

***DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE**—Adapted from the story by Robert Louis Stevenson, directed by Rouben Mamoulian, with a cast including Fredric March, Miriam Hopkins and Rose Hobart. Paramount, 9 reels. Stevenson's old fable of the struggle between a man's good and evil natures given a more modern interpretation, which is made exceedingly effective by the most efficient of camera work. Fredric March and Miriam Hopkins both give striking performances. *Mature audience.*

EINE FREUDIN SO GOLDIG WIE DU (A Sweetheart So Nice As You)—Written by Bobby Luthge, Karl Noti and Wenzel Wassermann, directed by Karl Lamac, with a cast including Anny Ondra and Felix Bressart. Tobis-Forenfilms, 8 reels. A lively and amusing German musical farce, with an attractive and hoydenish heroine. *Family audience.*

THE FIGHTING MARSHALL—Screen story by Frank Howard Clark, directed by D. Ross Ledeman, with a cast headed by Tim McCoy. Columbia, 6 reels. A Western story of a man who escapes from prison on the day his pardon was granted, and goes West to find the person who railroaded him into prison. *Family audience.*

THE GABLES MYSTERY—An English production with a cast including Anne Gray, Gerald Rawlinson and Charles Farrell. British International, 6 reels. A mystery story, with a well worked-out plot, of a young girl who beats the men of Scotland Yard at their own game. *Mature audience.*

GALLOPING THROUGH—Screen story by Wellwyn Totten, directed by Lloyd Nosler, with a cast headed by Tom Tyler. Monogram, 5 reels. A Western with good acting and excellent riding. The story, although the familiar plot of a man avenging his father's murder, is so well treated and so full of suspense that it makes good entertainment. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

HUSBAND'S HOLIDAY—Adapted from "The Marriage Bed" by Ernest Pascal, directed by Robert Milton, with a cast including Clive Brook, Charles Ruggles, Vivienne Osborn and Juliette Compton. Paramount, 7 reels. A well

told story of modern marriage in which the husband suffers from a temporary fascination for another woman—but the wife wins him back and the family is happily reunited. *Mature audience.*

KAISERLIEBCHEN—Directed by Hans Tintner, with a cast including Liane Haid and Walter Janssen. Tobis-Forenfilms, 7 reels. A pleasant costume romance about a postmaster's daughter and an emperor—incognito he meets and befriends her and they fall in love. Charmingly acted and mounted. *Family audience.*

LADIES OF THE BIG HOUSE—Written by Ernest Booth, directed by Marion Gehring, with a cast including Sylvia Sidney, Wynne Gibson, Gene Raymond and Earle Foxe. Paramount, 8 reels. The story of a young husband and wife railroaded to prison by city corruption. It ranges from impressive social criticism to out-and-out melodrama. Excellently acted and produced but rather grim entertainment for those who do not like to have political evils called strongly to their attention. *Mature audience.*

***LADIES OF THE JURY**—Adapted from the play by Frederick Ballard, directed by Lowell Sherman, with a cast headed by Edna May Oliver. RKO-Radio, 7 reels. Amusing farce comedy in which Edna May Oliver ably fills the part played by Mrs. Fiske in the stage version. When Mrs. Crane, a lady of position, finds herself in disagreement with the eleven other jurors serving with her, she resorts to highly effective and diverting methods to convert them to her viewpoint. *Mature audience.*

MAKER OF MEN—Screen story by Howard J. Green and Edward Sedgwick, directed by Edward Sedgwick, with a cast including Jack Holt, Richard Cromwell and John Wayne. Columbia, 7 reels. Jack Holt as a football coach and Richard Cromwell as his son in a human football story in which there is something more important at stake than winning the game for Alma Mater's sake. Very well acted and good dialogue—incidentally some good football. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MANHATTAN PARADE—Adapted from a play by Samuel Shipman, directed by Lloyd Bacon, with a cast including Winnie Lightner, Charles Butterworth and Smith & Dale. Warner Bros., 8 reels. An amusing comedy done in color. The plot, which incidentally satirizes the theatrical business, deals with a woman who has built up a big fancy dress costume business. She retires and leaves her affairs in the hands of her husband, and trouble follows. *Family audience.*

***MATA HARI**—Written by Benjamin Glazer and Leo Birinski, directed by George Fitzmaurice, with a cast including Greta Garbo, Ramon Novarro, Lionel Barrymore, Lewis Stone and Karen Morley. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 10 reels. A fictionalized version of the last days in the career of the notorious Dutch dancer who was a spy in the Great War. Greta Garbo is particularly glamorous as the heroine, and the picture seems likely to be one of the most successful of the star's career. *Mature audience.*

MEN OF CHANCE—Written by Louis Weitzenkorn, directed by George Archainbaud, with a cast including Ricardo Cortez, Mary Astor, John Halliday. RKO-Radio, 7 reels. A well-acted drama of the race course, with Ricardo Cortez as the big race track man who cannot be beaten, Mary Astor as a fake countess and John Halliday as a suave rival book-maker. *Mature audience.*

MY WIFE'S FAMILY—English production with a cast including Gene Gerard and Muriel Angeles. British International, 7 reels. A comedy of a mother-in-law who comes to visit a happy couple—and the trouble she starts. Although some of the jokes are oldish and the picture could stand shortening, it is quite amusing. *Mature audience.*

PARTNERS—Written by Donald W. Lee, directed by Fred Allen, starring Tom Keene. RKO-Pathé, 6 reels. A Western that is above the average. The plot concerns a small boy and his hero, and the hunt for the man who killed the child's grandfather. The boy is appealing, the riding excellent, and there are occasional bits of song by a cowboy quartette that are good. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PEACH O' RENO—Story by Tim Whelan, directed by William Seiter, starring Robert Woolsey and Bert Wheeler. RKO-Radio, 7 reels. A satirical farce about the divorce racket, full of wise-cracks, some of them pretty broad, and typical Wheeler and Woolsey antics. There is more cleverness and comedy than in most of the pictures made by this pair. *Mature audience.*

***PRIVATE LIVES**—Adapted from the play by Noel Coward, directed by Sidney Franklin, with a cast including Norma Shearer, Robert Montgomery, Reginald Denny and Una Merkle. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. Noel Coward's witty and sprightly play adapted with great competence. It is about a divorced couple who could not do without each other in spite of quarrels. Except for the provincial taste it is highly diverting entertainment, though those who saw the original cast in the play may find some of its fine points made rather obvious. *Mature audience.*

RACING YOUTH—Written by Earle Snell, directed by Vin Moore, with a cast including Frank Albertson, June Clyde, Slim Summerville and Louise Fazenda. Universal, 7 reels. The not unusual plot of two automobile manufacturers who are rivals, and the race they stage to prove which car is supreme. The race is the high spot of the picture. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE RAINBOW TRAIL—Adapted from the story by Zane Grey, directed by David Howard, with a cast including George O'Brien and Cecilia Parker. Fox, 6 reels. Arizona scenery so magnificent that it is thrilling, as a background for one of the triest of Zane Grey plots. For unsophisticated audiences and nature lovers. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SAFE IN HELL—Adapted from the play by Houston Branch, directed by William A. Wellman, starring Dorothy Mackaill. First National, 7 reels. The story of a girl's sacrifice to keep a promise to the man she loves. The acting is good and the story has a strong ending. *Mature audience.*

THE SECRET WITNESS—Adapted from the novel "Murder in the Gilded Cage" by Sam Sewack, directed by Thornton Freeland, with a cast including Una Merkle, William Collier, Jr., and Zasu Pitts. Columbia, 7 reels. An interesting murder mystery—who killed the man-about-town. His wife, the brother of the girl he betrayed, his friend who is in love with his wife, the man's valet, or the monkey. The mystery holds till the end of the picture, and keeps the audience on its toes. *Mature audience.*

SOOKY—Adapted from Percy Crosby's "Dear Sooky," directed by Norman Taurog, with a cast including Jackie Cooper, Robert Coogan and Jackie Searle. Paramount, 9 reels. A sequel to "Skippy," in which Sooky is finally rescued from Shanty-town. Amusing and moving, with an extraordinary performance by Jackie Cooper. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

STEPPING SISTERS—Adapted from the play by Howard W. Comstock, directed by Seymour Felix, with a cast including Minna Gombell, Louise Dresser and Jobyna Howland. Fox, 6 reels. An amusing farce concerning what happens when three ex-burlesque queens get together after many years. *Mature audience.*

SUNSET TRAIL—Screen story by Ben Cohen, directed by D. R. Eason, starring Ken Maynard. Tiffany, 6 reels. Ken Maynard and his almost-more-than-human horse in the kind of Western that they do so well. Especially good for juvenile audiences. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THIS RECKLESS AGE—Adapted from the play "The Goose Hangs High" by Lewis Beach, directed by Frank Tuttle, with a cast including Buddy Rogers, Richard Bennett and Peggy Shannon. Paramount, 8 reels. A warm and human play about the essential decency of the younger generation, brought up to date in a well-acted and well directed production. *Family audience.*

***TONIGHT OR NEVER**—Adapted from a play by Lili Hatvany, Americanized by Frederick and Fanny Hatton, directed by Mervyn LeRoy, with a cast including Gloria Swanson, Mervyn Douglas, Ferdinand Gottchalk and Alison Skipworth. United Artists, 7 reels. A Continental comedy of a prima donna's emotional awakening, which she deliberately seeks for the development of her art. A smooth, amusing and extremely well-dressed picture, for people who like to see love-games played in a sophisticated manner. It appears to have a strong feminine appeal. *Mature audience.*

THE UNEXPECTED FATHER—Written by Dale Van Every, directed by Thornton Freeland, with a cast including Slim Summerville and Zasu Pitts. Universal, 7 reels. An amusing comedy of a man who is adopted by a little girl. The situation becomes rather embarrassing, especially when he is about to be married, but the problem is cleared up satisfactorily. *Family audience.*

THE WOMAN FROM MONTE CARLO—Adapted from a play by Georges Nepote and Claude Farrere, directed by Michael Curtiz, with a cast including Lil Dagover, Walter Huston and Warren William. First National, 6 reels. The first American picture of one of Germany's loveliest and best actresses. It is a story of intrigue and sacrifice on a French battleship at the outbreak of the war. *Mature audience.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

Arrowsmith—12 rls.

(See page 10)

Mature audience.

Elisabeth von Oesterreich—7 rls.

(See page 11)

Mature audience.

SHORT SUBJECTS

BATTER UP—Vitaphone, 1 reel. Penrod and Sam in a baseball game. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BELIEVE IT OR NOT NO. 3—Vitaphone, 1 reel. Collection of unusual things. *Family audience.*

THE CLOWN (Oswald Cartoon)—Universal, 1 reel. The Lucky Rabbit joins the circus as clown—funny circus animals. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

CURIOSITIES NO. 229—Columbia, 1 reel. This episode includes the crab market in San Francisco, typewriter with 3,000 characters, petrified forest, et cetera. *Family audience.*

DARN TOOTIN'—Vitaphone, 1 reel. Rudy Wicdoeft and his saxophonists in a musical act. *Family audience.*

ETHER TALKS—RKO-Radio, 1 reel. A Liberty short story handled with unusual imagination and effectiveness. *Mature audience.*

FIRES OF VULCAN (Magic Carpet Series)—Fox, 1 reel. Various manifestations of the earth's heat, unusually interesting. *Family audience.*

THE FISHERMAN (Oswald Cartoon)—*Universal*, 1 reel. Oswald and his girl go fishing and discover a hidden treasure. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

FOOTLIGHTS—*Vitaphone*, 2 reels. Two clever young people get a Texas millionaire to back their show. *Family audience.*

HE-MAN HOCKEY—*Educational*, 1 reel. The Boston Bruins training for their hockey season and playing an exciting game. *Family audience.*

ISTANBUL TO BAGDAD (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. Interesting glimpses of Turkish and Arabian life. *Family audience.*

JUST PALS—(Babe Ruth Series)—*Universal*, 1 reel. Babe Ruth shows his small pals how to play baseball. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE LAND OF GHANDI (Vagabond Adventures Series)—*RKO-Pathe*, 1 reel. Instructive travelogue of India. *Family audience.*

LAST DANCE (Cartoon)—*RKO-Pathe*, 1 reel. Amusing cartoon with clever musical accompaniment. *Family audience.*

MEDITERRANEAN BY-WAYS (Traveltalks)—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Interesting travel picture with accompanying lecture. *Family audience.*

MICKEY CUTS UP (Mickey Mouse Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Mickey Mouse acquires a lawn mower. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MICKEY'S ORPHANS (Mickey Mouse Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Unusually clever and amusing—Mickey finds a basket of orphan kittens on his doorstep on Christmas Eve. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MOTHER-IN-LAWS' DAY—*RKO-Pathe*, 2 reels. Amusing farce with Edgar Kennedy doing a harassed husband afflicted with some exasperating in-laws. *Family audience.*

MUSICAL JUSTICE—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Rudy Vallee as the judge has a musical court and tries cases by syncopation. *Family audience.*

NOAH'S OUTING (Terrytoons)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Noah and his animals and their adventures in the ark. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

ONE GOOD DEED—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Penrod playing doctor. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

OVER THE YUKON TRAIL (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. Beautifully photographed travelogue of the Yukon. *Family audience.*

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 5—*Paramount*, 1 reel. How Big Boy Williams trains polo ponies; a child learning to tap dance, et cetera. *Family audience.*

PATHE REVIEW NOS. 5-6—*RKO-Pathe*, 1 reel each. Beautiful coral reefs; a dream castle that took ten years to build; Christmas service at Riverside Church; Robert Benchley's ideas of the depression, et cetera. *Family audience.*

PERFECT CONTROL (Babe Ruth Series)—*Universal*, 1 reel. Babe Ruth shows his young friends perfect control in baseball. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE RESTLESS SAX (Krazy Kat Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Krazy Kat takes saxophone lessons by mail and becomes a second Rudy Vallee. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

RUSSIAN LULLABY (Cartoon)—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Comedy song cartoon of Irving Berlin's old favorite. *Family audience.*

SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 6—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Interesting and amusing bits from old films, such as the first flight of the Wright airplane. *Family audience.*

SEASON'S GREETINGS—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Various Warner stars in a Christmas medley. *Family audience.*

SLIDE BABE SLIDE (Babe Ruth Series)—*Universal*, 1 reel. The Babe shows the youngsters how to play ball and has a great time doing it. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SPREEWALD FOLK (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. Life among attractive simple peasants in Germany. *Family audience.*

THE UNEMPLOYED GHOST—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Tom Howard in an amusing comedy of a man who spends the night in a haunted house and becomes acquainted with the ghosts, who, he discovers have their unemployment troubles too. *Family audience.*

VICTORY PLAYS, *Universal*, 1 reel. Genevieve Tobin explains the plays that Big Bill Tilden makes in a tennis game. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE WEEK-END MYSTERY, *Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Short S. S. Van Dine detective story with Donald Meek solving the mystery. *Family audience.*

WITH THE FOREIGN LEGION (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. Picturesquely showing life in France's Foreign Legion. *Family audience.*

THE WORLD AT PRAYER (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. Ceremonial rites of the greatest religions in the world. Very interesting. *Family audience.*

THE BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL
of the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures
offers through its
AFFILIATED BETTER FILMS COMMITTEES
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The Better Films Committee or Motion Picture Study Club plan has been found by many communities to be an adaptable and effective method of accomplishing telling organized local work for better pictures.

The purposes of the Better Films Committees affiliated with the Better Films National Council are:

To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

The Better Films National Council as an aid in carrying out these purposes furnishes an information service through its various publications.

Please use the coupon below and write for the publications you yourself would like or would like to have sent to interested friends.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. VII, No. 2



February, 1932



Lionel Barrymore as the German father in the "Broken Lullaby" (see page 16)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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Reviewing Our Annual Meeting

THERE is a feeling of pleasurable surprise in reviewing our recent Annual Conference and Luncheon. When early consideration of the Conference was taken up by the various Committees of the Board some thought was given to eliminating, as many organizations were doing, the annual meeting this year. However, it was finally decided to hold a conference but in a more modest way without an arrangement of the usual full program or an anticipation of the usual wide attendance. With the intention of making the Conference definitely serious and practical the main subject chosen for discussion was "Special Functions of the Motion Picture in Recreation and Education." This subject aroused a surprising and encouraging response and there resulted a program that many have said was exceptionally good. And a further surprise was the fine attendance. It was large, in fact larger than last year and delegates came from various parts of the country. States represented were Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island and Wisconsin. The general purpose in selecting the topic under discussion at the Conference was indicated in the introduction to the program:

"The study of the motion picture demands cognizance and investigation of all its broadening tendencies and their aspects. In the

entertainment field the social usage of the film is to be found in a discriminating patronage of the best, together with the recognition that, since different classes of people, like different individuals, differ in their entertainment preferences, a large variety of tastes that may be led into channels of discrimination must be encountered and provided for.

"Many previous Conferences have been concerned with the motion picture as entertainment, and the problems thereof discussed, and this has lead to a well crystallized social program, liberal, constructive and based on an appreciation of the films as a valuable social asset of enjoyment and pleasure for the great entertainment-seeking public.

"Interest in more specialized forms of the motion picture is perceptibly growing—an interest in using this great medium for social benefits apart from its use as entertainment. It is largely in response to this growing interest that the Conference this year is called, to consider the films as teachers, cultural guides, and as tools for a more scientific way of training the minds of both children and adults.

"This is a particularly fitting moment for such a Conference, since specialists in education and film producers are now for the first time beginning to work together in an effective way. The only further need is for

the public, particularly parents, and educational authorities, to join forces with the specialists and producers, in order to introduce into general use an effective new instrument in mental and social training, so much speedier and more exciting in its method than anything we are accustomed to that it is hard to prophesy its far-reaching results."

Some of what has been accomplished by this getting together of educators and producers was brought to the conference audience by notable speakers and by graphic film presentations.

After spending the opening morning, Thursday, January 21st, at a Review Committee meeting of the National Board in Warner Bros. Private Theatre reviewing a picture, the Conference began its sessions at the headquarters hotel, the Pennsylvania. Judge John R. Davies, Chairman of the National Board, opened the session with a greeting to the delegates and an introductory address by Dr. Louis I. Harris of the Executive Committee of the Board followed. The afternoon topic, "Functions and Uses of the Motion Picture in Education" was presented by Dr. Wallace W. Atwood, President of Clark University, Miss E. Winifred Crawford, Instructor of Visual Education of the State Teachers College, Montclair, N. J., and Director of Visual Education of the Montclair Schools, Mrs. E. Marguerite E. Schwarzman, Director of the Children's Laboratories and Instructor in the New York University Institute of Education, and Miss Rita Hochheimer, Acting Director of Visual Instruction of the New York Public Schools.

A second session devoted to inspiring addresses by authoritative speakers under the subject of "The Education of Public Opinion Regarding the Specialized Motion Picture" was held on Friday morning, January 22nd. The speakers were Prof. Kirtley F. Mather, of the Department of Geology of Harvard University, Mrs. Eva vB. Hansl, Staff Associate of the White House Confer-

ence and Associate Editor of Parents' Magazine, Mr. F. S. Mathewson, Superintendent of Recreation of the Union County (N. J.) Park Commission, and Mrs. Helen F. MacPherson, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer of Hartford, Conn., with Col. Clarence A. Perry as presiding officer.

The addresses delivered at these two sessions will be published in forthcoming issues of this Magazine as they contain much which will make valuable study club material for Better Films Committees.

There were two sessions devoted to the showing of outstanding educational pictures. One showing was that of several films in the Movietone School Series arranged by Mrs. Grace Allen Bangs, Director of the Woman's Division of the Educational Department of The Fox Film Corporation.

The other was of several films from the different series made by the Electrical Research Products Corporation and distributed by Educational Pictures. Much interest was expressed in both of these showings as actually demonstrating the subject of visual education under discussion at the Conference.

One departure from custom in this year's arrangement was the holding of the Annual Luncheon on Friday between sessions instead of the usual Saturday Luncheon, the culminating event of the Conference. However the group gathered for the Luncheon was under the circumstances quite a large one and most enthusiastically greeted the speakers and guests of honor. The speakers included Leslie Howard, stage and screen star, Deems Taylor, music critic and composer, Theresa Helburn, Executive Director of the Theatre Guild, Morris Ernst, jurist, author and member of the National Council for Freedom from Censorship, Frau Dhyrenfurth, only woman in the film recorded expedition to Mt. Kunchenjunga in the Himalayas, and Robert Shippee, discoverer of the Great Wall of Peru in a film aerial expedition. Future issues of the Magazine will carry these addresses. The guest celebrities introduced to the audience

were Jean Harlow, Nancy Carroll and Mary Kennedy.

At the close of the Friday morning session several resolutions were presented by the Resolutions Committee and approved by the Conference in session. They are presented here:

*The Motion Picture in Education
Community Better Films Plan*

WHEREAS, this Conference has been asked to consider the question of the motion picture as a teaching tool and aid in visual instruction for children and adult and parent education; and

WHEREAS, it has heard the testimony of experts engaged in preparing films for visual education and the classroom application of such films; and

WHEREAS, we have heard testimony that effective teaching films facilitate the work of the teachers and eliminate mental strain and fatigue in pupils; and

WHEREAS, if the motion picture can speed and make more effective the education of the young, it appears that it can be equally effective in educating adults; and

WHEREAS, we believe that education must be forward-looking and utilize such improved instruments and methods as are placed ready to its use; and

WHEREAS, educators and film producers are now working together more effectively than ever before; and

WHEREAS, we believe that the public should be educated to the need of seizing upon such improved instruments and methods so that public and educator may combine in supporting their use not only in principle but in practice; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that this Conference endorse the use of motion pictures in schools and colleges and for parent as well as for vocational education, and further pledges itself to support all efforts to educate the public to support the idea of such use of motion pictures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, since it is apparent that questions such as the selection of motion picture apparatus best suited to the needs of school teaching, and the types and kind of films to be used in the most effective way are still to be solved, this Conference endorse the idea of an adequate survey to be made under the auspices of impartial authorities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, since this Conference entertains no thought of relinquishing its interest in motion pictures as entertainment, this Conference go on record in reaffirming its faith in the community plan for the social use of the motion picture as introduced and carried forward by the work of the National Board of Review and its affiliated groups, thus voicing endorsement of (1) the Better Films and Motion Picture Study Club Plan as interpreted and carried forward by the National Board of Review and such groups, (2) unfaltering opposition to legal censorship, federal and state, and (3) the stimulation of new local effort and further organization for securing the finest screen, with national contact and research aid secured through the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, the sections of this resolution that apply to visual education be brought to the attention of the educators of the country.

Opposition to Censorship

WHEREAS, it is our deep feeling and profound conviction that freedom of opinion and expression is fundamental to the achievement and maintenance of a proper degree of freedom; and

WHEREAS, this feeling and conviction have been reached through our search for a liberal and at the same time scientific method of dealing with the social functions of the motion picture; and

WHEREAS, at each of the preceding seven conferences called by the National

(Continued on page 19)

How the Specialized Motion Picture is Developed

By DR. WALLACE W. ATWOOD, *President, Clark University*

As stated in the review of our Conference elsewhere in this Magazine, we plan to publish the various addresses delivered at the Conference. The first one we are presenting is that of Dr. Atwood, the opening speaker of the Conference, but we do this with apologies because of our inability to really bring Dr. Atwood's subject to you, for in addition to his interesting talk he did some extremely clever illustrative drawing on a large blackboard which unfortunately we cannot reproduce. This however is shown in the different pictures prepared by him in the Fox School Movietone series.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

I WOULD like to begin my remarks by telling of a conversation which the late Thomas A. Edison held with the Countess of Warwick in 1911. He said, "I hope that the time will come, and that you and I will live to see it, when the films will be used to make education more interesting and vivid, and therefore more valuable. The film can teach more quickly and more accurately than any other medium. The whole world can be brought to the school-room by the film. Do you know that pleasure forms an important part of education, and greatly simplifies the act of learning? We have not yet discovered the actual processes by which mental assimilation becomes easier, but the films should open up a new world to childhood, and it is not difficult to imagine how much easier a lesson in history or geography will be, if the subjects of these lessons are actually made to pass before the eyes. Think of botany, zoology, natural history and chemistry taught in that way. The new education will be through the eyes. The time will soon come when we will have talking pictures and color pictures, too! Think of that—think of the children who will sit in a Virginia or Essex school-room, and see India and China and Japan, the Arctic Ocean and Russia's grain harvest. They will know what the people look like, what the land produces, how everything grows and can be cultivated to fulfill the needs of man. They will find out how to choose congenial careers, and how to go about their

jobs. When they know all that, they won't be so anxious to go to war! They will have other ideas, other ways of developing themselves. The fruit of the finest brains will be used to teach millions all over the world, not merely a few hundred young students. One lecture can be given again and again; instead of letting our children be taught by mediocre minds, we shall have both children and their teachers inspired by the greatest intellects, whether they are found in Cochin, China, or Keokuk, or Essex, England."

The subject which we have before us and which, of course, must be divided among a number of us is very broad and I am a specialist in one field. I have been very much interested in seeing the work done in natural history with the remarkable pictures taken of frogs and spiders and butterflies and birds with the natural sound taken too, and I have been just as much interested in seeing history films prepared in the studio reproducing with the help of trained actors and children, who are often remarkable as natural actors, historical scenes. But I do not know so much about those things. I am a specialist in geography and I am going to dwell more particularly on that field.

We have passed the day when we were teaching children to bound the states and name their capitals and calling that a geography lesson. We have come to look at the world as a great habitat where people are living and constantly adjusting and readjusting themselves to the environment where they are located. That is a human problem; that is a social problem. These people come into a place, wherever it happens to be, whether on the coasts of Norway or on the lowlands of Japan, and attempt to adjust themselves there and so they work out a drama. There is nothing more dramatic than the life of the people of today. That is the real moving picture and so geography to clearly function best must bring into the

classroom the home life, the city life, the family life, the life in other countries.

We want the American children, just as we want the children of other countries, to know the people of distant lands. I believe that the one great barrier that is holding the people of the world apart, now that mountains are not barriers and oceans are not barriers and deserts are not barriers, is lack of understanding. All the great physical barriers have been broken down, but there remains one barrier which prevents the people of the world from sitting down and agreeing through their representatives to work together happily, and that is we do not know each other well enough. We have not established friendships across these boundary lines adequately. So I look at geography as one of the subjects in the schoolroom that has that great responsibility of introducing to our children, the children and people of other lands. But the spirit of that introduction, the language of it, makes a tremendous difference.

If I take the children, in imagination, to Norway and I ask them to come with me to a great rugged, mountainous coast where the lands project into the sea as peninsulas and as you coast along you see little islands out at sea, you will find that among these islands there are little boats of fishermen. Perhaps the little boat that we have come in will turn

to go up into one of the great mountain fiords on this coast, and as it goes further and further inland we see these beautiful mountain forms rising 2,000, 3,000 feet above us. We see wing after wing as on the artificial stage, a great mountain mass and the seawater projecting far inland. Our little boat perhaps comes to anchor here and we take a smaller boat to go further inland. We would like to see who could live there! Is this a human habitat? Is this a place where people can live? We see a few trees in around these great boulders, down the base of the cliffs. We see in the back perhaps another entrance. Far back in the distance we see the mountain forms snow-capped. Through the cold waters from the neighboring mountain streams come live fish. We go into a place where there is perhaps a little village and the villagers come up these little streams and get the fish. Perhaps there is a single, lonesome little home where the people want to know about the outside world; where they have a little surplus fish which they want to trade with you—for cloth, or for other kinds of food than that they are used to. Perhaps you will find that some more enterprising or modern type of person has come in here and found in this great waterfall the possibility of generating electricity, and he has brought that electricity along here with great force and is taking

*Dr. Wallace W. Atwood,
President of
Clark University,
Worcester,
Mass.,
at a screening
of
"A Visit to
Japan"*



it out to some industrial center. That power is being transmitted across the continent of Europe, off to the south even as far as Paris and that Norwegian electricity has become a commodity of commerce. This little isolated land, this little fiord country of desolate appearance far off in the north, has its touch with and gives its contribution to the rest of the life of Europe.

What will they do with their surplus fish? Sell it. They take it down to Oslo and there it accumulates and then it must be sold to the people of southern Europe—Spain, Portugal. They want more fish than they can get in their warm waters, they want this fish from the north. What do they want to give in exchange? Wine that they have in abundance. And then Norway says, "We will drink your wine and you will eat our fish. We cannot afford to carry out this policy of prohibition. We will amend our laws so that we may sell our fish." You enter here into international relationship, difficult problems for nations to settle, and so this little home away up in here has its tie-up with the life of distant peoples.

Turn for a moment to the life of the farmer of Iowa or Minnesota or Dakota, he cannot today lift his elbow without nudging the man who is producing wheat on the plains of Argentina. It is really so. And also the sheep ranchman in Montana cannot raise his elbow without nudging the man in the same business in Australia. The surplus wheat goes to a common market in England from all parts of the world and the price of the surplus wheat in the world market determines the rates the Iowa or Dakota farmer gets for his wheat. The quantity of surplus wool is recorded carefully in the Boston wool market. On that depends the price of wool all over the world. The reduction of wool causes a little message to go through the air, picked up in Long Island, relayed to Boston and before the day is over the fear of reduction in the Australian wool clipping means that the price of woolen clothes throughout New England is raised and perhaps throughout the world.

We find we have to try to teach the children today that the environment in which other nations are trying to adjust themselves, in which we are trying to adjust ourselves, is world-wide. There is no possibility of playing the game of isolation any longer. We have tried it long enough. We are the worst of the nations at that game today and we see as we go into the classroom as teachers, as we travel over the world that it is impossible. The day of cooperation is coming. The environment to which we must adapt ourselves is world-wide.

Therefore the problem in the classroom is to bring right to the children the people of other lands. We will imagine now that I have been asked to tell you how to educate the children as to Japan. I might be right in the studio where two terrible cameras are facing me and the microphone is traveling around. I could show how the route goes across the Pacific until we land at Honolulu and then we go on until we get to Tokyo. But rather than that type of lesson I will say, "Close your eyes now and in a minute you will be there," and the picture flashes on and we are flying over Japan in an airplane looking down on this country, getting a bird's eye view of it. The airplane takes us there and the camera is doing the work. Then we turn back, among these people to see their homes and to see them at work. Then there are the great, bold mountain forms and as we look into these mountain forms we can see some beautiful little streams. But the most conspicuous thing as we look at Japan from the air is little flat land. Off over there we see the mountain almost revered by these people as a sacred mountain, the volcano once active. We can see a line that was the road and we can see that the houses are put on one side of the road. They appear just like dots to us. Why on this up side, you ask, and not on the other? Why not over here? They wanted all that land to produce crops. And then a cut in the land comes and some of it is flooded and you can see a few little people in the fields bending over working. I could

talk to you about this or I could tell you to read a book about it. But close your eyes and with the film you are there. You are hearing now the natural sounds of these Japanese in the field, talking, singing, as they work transplanting, harvesting and thrashing the rice. The sound you hear was recorded for its educational value, not for its value in the theatre. This picture was taken under my supervision for this purpose and many others are being taken all over the world. Fifty men are taking the pictures and if the schools want them they can have them. They can take the children there.

We say to the young people, "Where else would you like to go?" To some other far distant land? Perhaps you would like to go far up in the mountains of Switzerland? So I will invite you to go there in the summer time and up here in these mountains, perhaps by a zig-zag, we will find our way into the true Alps, those high peaks of the mountains where they take the cures in the summer. I want you to know the Swiss people; see what they do from day to day so we will look at this picture and tomorrow we will talk about what it meant to you when the hour for our lesson comes around again.

In the use of the film we make a review of it afterwards and it fits into the school-room work as an integral part which does not replace the teacher or the text book. It does not put a new and extraordinary thing into the classroom. It simply helps. It makes it different.

As I am talking to you, I am trying to have you imagine a little bit how we make these pictures. Here we are in these Alpine fields and the cows, with the great bells on them that are recorded in the microphone as the picture is taken, are grazing about. And then we go into the little homes and see the people making butter. These Swiss people sing as they are working and at evening time a little group of the men after working hard all day go out and sing in the fullness of the mountain atmosphere just for the joy and their singing, which is a matter of train-

ing, brings the cows home. And so the story goes.

Do you think there is anything equal to it? I know of nothing that is equal to seeing these people in action, hearing their voices, in their conversation and in their singing, seeing the children at play. There is nothing anywhere like this. You cannot match this thing. You cannot match the spell-binding, the thrilling—the pleasurable element, the feeling that you are right there.

Now we have the power of the actual picture with the sound—natural sound. Do you want to go with me some day and see Vesuvius in eruption? I stop speaking and you hear the sound of the eruption. Do you want to go to Norway and Sweden and see the great physical features of geography and see the ice fall just at the time we are there? Go to the seashore and get the natural sound of the waves and see them at work? See the beauties of Yellowstone or Yosemite? Do you want to enrich the lives of the people of this country? Do you want to have them know the Japanese people, or the Chinese people, or the people of India? Do you want them to have something more than just the text books with a condensed statement or paragraph or two about these other nations? Do you want your children to have these opportunities?

I leave that thought. It can be done. The pictures, the technique of making them has been perfected. It can be done, but the obstacle is here. We might just as well face it. The public schools of this country are not yet educated to believe that it is worth what it costs. They are unwilling to spend the money that it costs to make these pictures or produce them and service the schools. That is where the slip comes. They sit waiting, cautiously conserving their resources. But the day will come; it is too good an idea. Edison's vision will come true but perhaps not in our time, not unless organizations like this National Board of Review and many other organizations really prove to be effective in the purposes which

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EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional* and *Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Road to Life

Directed by Nikolai Ekk, produced in U.S.S.R. by Mejrabpomfilm, distributed in U.S.A. by Amkino.

The Cast

"Dandy" Mustapha.....Tzyvan Kyrlo
Kolka.....Mikhail Djagefarov
Nikolai Sergejev.....Nikolai Batalov
Fomka Zhigan.....Mikhail Zharov
Kolka's father.....Vladimir Veshnovsky
Kolka's mother.....Regina Yanushkevich
Maria Skriabina.....Maria Antropova
Lelka "Meskiha".....Maria Gonta

WAR, intervention and famine deposited on the burdened shoulders of the new Russia thousands of homeless waifs, wild boys. Roving in tattered demalion bands, they terrified a people striving toward a better commonwealth. Violence upon these unfortunate but harrowing urchins was forbidden. Finally, in 1923, the problem became ferocious in its demand for solution. In consonance with the new conscience, a scheme was impelled to transform the wild boy into the vital citizen. The story of that synthesis is told by the first Soviet talkie, *Road to Life*.

Music . . . voices. Vertically from below, the image of Fomka Zhigan, the Fagin, rises to confront us, with his stiletto marked F.Zh. Not a caricatured offensive Fagin, but an affable chap, insidious in his attraction, facile on the balalaika to which he can sing ditties nostalgic and mischievous; no Dickensian villain but one

who accounts for his hold on the vandal children by his sportiveness. Such portrait demands a mature temerity; one slip and the audience may sympathize with the culprit, the marplot. In this instance, the audience apprehends the spell without yielding to it.

From a band of gambling waifs rises the ringleader, the Tatar, "Dandy" Mustapha, played by a boy out of his own experience as a child of the streets. A supreme performance: none of the point-for-point mimicry, the tedious simulation of the sedulous ape of stage and screen; it is composed of surprise and inevitability. We do not know what to expect of Mustapha, his variable and meaningful laugh, his sullenness and delight; he contradicts our expectation from the start, but every contradiction convinces us of the inevitability of the detail—enormous acting, a penetrating reality. Mustapha plays a three-cornered game whose other vertices are Zhigan and Zhigan's lady-friend; he lifts a fine leather suitcase from a dame just emerged from the terminal.

In a cozy, samovar-appointed chamber dwells Kolka, fifteen that day, with his parents. A congenial home: the mother's long hair graces the picture, her smile embellishes it. The mother goes out. She stops to buy an apple. Across the way, Mustapha, commander, orders "Apple!" One of the boys crosses, appropriates two apples from the vendor's basket; Kolka's mother

BULLETIN

THIS MONTH
Exceptional
Road to Life
Honorable Mention
Der Andere
Broken Lullaby
Zwei Menschen

PREVIOUS MONTH
1932
Honorable Mention
Arrowsmith
Elisabeth von Oesterreich

intercepts him, he trips her, she falls. The cross of the medical aid, perpendiculars bisecting in a white circle, speeds before our eyes. Too late!

Kolka's life is severed. The father takes to drink. He threatens the boy. The boy runs away. He joins with the homeless children . . . In the windy frozen night, social workers and militiamen raid the cellars and dens to round up these boys. The boys fight the raiders, led by a woman. We get a glimpse into the rôle woman has played in the reconstruction of human life in the U.S. S.R. The boys are brought before the commission. Mustapha is brought in. He recognizes his questioners by name; he knows them from previous raids. To each of the queries upon his earlier adventures with this or that Institution, he answers with increasing lustiness that he escaped. When he is threatened genially with more emphatic incarceration his sullenness verges on an explosive counter-threat. The performance is colossal but secure.

The social worker Sergeyev has opposed jail as a place or a method for the wild boys. He undertakes a more voluntary way for the ragamuffins. They take him for a doctor but he surprises them with goodwill. A series of surprises puts them off guard, renders them indecisive. From eight years of experience with boys, five years with American wild boys, I undersign this technique. Whatever the degree of sophistication of a child, there is still some point in his make-up which is still a child's. He is still a child in relation to a new experience: he is wise in relation to what he knows, and innocent wherever the detail is unexpected. When the boys demonstrate against the suggestion of the collective, Sergeyev roars in laughter and draws from his pocket—what?—cigarettes, golden fruit, eager fingers. No counter-attack, no moralizing—humane strategy. the boys consent to go planning to escape en route, but when they find they are not guarded, their decision fades. Mustapha the thief is entrusted with money for food for the journey.

At the collective the cross-engraved doors of a former monastery are the boys' first experience. The surprise is the opening of the doors into a workshop: "The State trusts us!" The surprises become normal in the active life—work, bathing, song. Old habits recur: negatively—the stealing of the spoons, positively—Mustapha's experience as a sneak-thief who cut the rear of a Persian lamb coat from the very back of a woman directs his hand and knife in the cutting of leather.

In the meantime Kolka has become Zhigan's right-hand man. With his boss he perpetrates the theft of a pair of boots, but fails to escape. He is beaten. The attacker is condemned as of the past for beating a child. Kolka runs from the court into the Moscow winter. Bitterly pensive he recalls his home, his present plight. He leads a host of wild boys to the commission to demand that they be taken to the collective.

Spring, thaw, isolation, no raw materials. The boys are nerve-wracked, pugnacious. Sergeyev goes to Moscow. In his absence there is vandalism—gambling, drinking—Lelka kills the community dog, after that a fury of destruction. The more responsible collectivists, led by Mustapha and Kolka, stop the vandals. Sergeyev returns. The boys converge toward him slowly, shame-faced. All he says is: "You had a good time." He unpacks a miniature railroad and locomotive; they will build a real one just like it, Mustapha to be engineer, Kolka conductor, who doesn't care to participate? No reply, Sergeyev smiles. The boys acclaim him by ecstatically tossing him into the air; to which follows-up dirt flying—the railroad is being built to a song of gusto.

Zhigan's gang mourns the loss of its lieutenants. The gang opens a house of pleasure near the collective, to which come first the irresponsible, led by Lelka. The pride of the collective—Mustapha, Kolka and others—follow. They dance, dance, dance wildly then suddenly turn guns upon the Zhigan plotters. Zhigan escapes. The den is emptied.



The wild boy, Mustapha, in "Road to Life."

The railroad is completed. Workers' delegates arrive. Kolka's father comes. Mustapha has gone the night before in a hand-car to the starting-point. As he rode he sang a Tatar song . . . and a frog croaked at intervals. Zhigan has been ahead of him and released a rail. The hand-car strikes the gap, Mustapha is thrown into the air, he regains his breath—Zhigan is before him. They fight—a groan of pain.

Kolka cannot wait for Mustapha, the time to start is past. The train is off—Hurrahs!—moving at an incline up the screen, until the gap—where Mustapha lies slain. He has his wish the first on the first locomotive, conducted by his pal Kolka. At the terminus the band and the boys polish up. Sergeyev is worried by the delay, but at last—the equipage. The band strikes up the "Internationale," succeeded by the dirge and keen of the siren as Mustapha enters in state.

The mature Soviet mind says: "What we have gained has not been won without travail and profound sacrifice. Let there be no Hallelujahs!" Miss Thirer of the News, too busy, I suppose, to see all of this admirable film, terminated it with Zhigan's demise—the American probability.

This film, the first directed by a young man, N. Ekk, is evidence of several conditions in the Soviet film, and in the Soviet society. Having treated the general canvasses of the revolution and the reconstruction, the new study is the detail, the intensive experience, the intimate and humane. Maturity permits the treatment of individuality as the focus of the social composition, individuality but not hero-worship. It permits the full story, the losses that add up to victory. In such a picture there will be no oratory, no fetish of the immense or grand technique—

that is the first articulation in a new environment, social or cinematic. The instruments will be as one with the idea, the narrative experience. That is what has happened in *Road to Life*, so that the too simple-eyed critics could not see the mastery of the technique, educated, to be sure, by earlier directors like Pudowkin, Eisenstein, Dovzhenko. The camera-work is excellent; the photographic defects are due not to the original work, but to the expedience of making prints from a duped negative—and no reviewer knew enough to indicate the fact. The original sound mechanism was imperfect but the film's aesthetic is an harmonious arrangement. This, remember, is the first Soviet talkie; *Potemkin* was not the first Soviet film. And yet *Road to Life* is for the talkie what *Potemkin* was, in part, for the mute film—the fulfillment of a first period. The Soviet film, being the expression

of a centrifugal society discharging fresh energies, is the completion of the processes of the cinema frustrated in the centripetal societies. The reviewers seem to have expected a spectacular, browbeating first Soviet talkie. Actually (and I said it more than a year ago) they do not want a Soviet film without the attack which they pretend to dislike, propaganda with a between-the-eyes punch. *Road to Life* realizes purposeful composition—it is the realization that is new—of authentic details: the music of mood and characterization, speaking at times instead of words; speech-as-sound; noise-and-utterance in variation; blank screen and sound; the motif of one instrument taken up by another; or, an opposite motif succeeding—these details are never intrusions because they are within the boundaries of the film.

There are several possible defects in the structure. At times there are too long a stretch of the blank screen—in itself a good device. However, this is not the same as saying that the film is too long: such an objection is due to the arbitrary and bad training of the American movie; speed is no essential of the movie. No film of profound content can move posthaste. Speed is o.k. for an empty vehicle that smashes itself when it comes to its terminus, but films intending an important aftersense belong to another category.

In the Zhigan-den scene the swirl of the images as the pride of the collective dance is a harmless virtuosity that is not wholly an error. It is, rather, the weakest choice from a number of alternatives. Yet just before it there is a triple diagonal image of Mustapha which is appropriate and easy in its participation. Similarly Ekk employs the temporary frozen image (not “still”) far more sensitively than it was used by Dovzhenko in *Arsenal*, where, however, a more pronounced use was demanded. A virtuosity alien to the film is the bobbing stuffed doll in the boot-stealing scene.

As to the scenario itself, there are some

likely questions. A didactic introduction (by Prof. John Dewey) is no substitute for the dramatic account of the waifs' origin; Kolka's origin, the sole one pictured, is accidental and exceptional, not the mass-instance; the death of the mother and the father's consequent conduct smack too much of the temperance-tract. Likely answers are: this is not the first or last film on the wild boys (we have met them before in *Children of the New Day*); out of the vast history of the homeless kids narrative portions were taken to effect a convincing reenactment; justification for Kolka is found in the fact that he is not an intruded accident but a product of the vandalism of the wild boys, with whom he joins (in itself an irony); further justification is in the visit of the father to the commission to look for Kolka among the rounded-up boys, and in the later scene where he is singled out among the visitors to the railroad's opening; climatic justification for Kolka is found in the moment when his plight meets with his memory to lead him to the collective. And here is where the titling—weakest part of the film—might have helped make more plausible the march of the boys upon the commission. When Kolka sits in intense pain after being beaten on the street, the titles, instead of “Fathers and mothers . . . suppose your innocent young child . . . etc., etc.”, might have augmented the accumulation within the boy: his past . . . his present plight . . . the call of the collective . . . Kolka decides! Kolka, tutored, with a background of stability of pride, is the reality-symbol of the social conscience refreshed. As to the degradation of Kolka's father, the mere fact that our *Ten Nights in a Barroom* has made simple recurrences insipid, melodramatic and self-conscious does not, in any way, cancel these recurrences as genuine. Genuineness depends on the fabric in which such a detail is found. And genuine this dramatic document is, surmounting by its total evidence whatever doubts as to details may arise in the beholder. Nor is the total evidence

dissipated by too elegiac an expression: there is death but not finality; sorrow but not purgative (as in *Soil*)—the conclusion is an active emotion, reassured by an unobtrusive current of mirth. Optimistic self-critical Russia.—H.A.P.

Zwei Menschen

(Two Souls)

Adapted from the novel by Richard Voss, directed by Erich Waschneck, photographed by Mutz Greenbaum, produced by Cicero Film Company, distributed by Capitol Film Exchange.

The Cast

Rochus	Gustav Froelich
Judith	Charlotte Susa
Count Enna	Fritz Alberti
Countess Enna	Hermine Sterler
The Cardinal	Friedrich Kayssler
House Chaplain	Bernd Alder
Lucy	Lucy Englisch

THERE is occasionally a motion picture of which one wishes one could simply say "Go and see it" instead of trying to describe it. *Zwei Menschen* is one of them. No description can quite convey the quality of it that is so likeable: praise says really very little.

However. *Zwei Menschen* is about a young couple in the Tyrol. Their youth is important, and the Tyrol is important, because there they are, very alive and full of life's spring-time in a place that nature has made pleasant and sometimes exciting to live in. Custom—tradition—has made, on the other hand, certain conditions that operate with a strength almost equal to that of nature, and hence the particular story that the picture tells.

The boy and the girl are in love, and it is an idyllic love that is very pleasant to watch. There seems to be no reason why their love should not follow a natural and normal course, eventuating in marriage and children and as much happiness as is com-

patible with advancing years in a simple existence. But the boy happens to be the younger son in a family where it is the immemorial custom to give the younger son to the priesthood. He has been brought up ignorant of this custom, which has the force of a family law, and when he is told about it he revolts, spiritedly and naturally. It is a law he does not recognize.

Here the thing called fate—whose force we realize when it is presented as inevitable—steps in and proceeds to make a poignant tragedy of the simple idyll. A sudden mountain flood comes along, in which the boy and girl are caught, inescapably. The families pray for rescue, and the boy's mother vows to the Virgin that if he is saved his life will be dedicated to her.

As it turns out the boy rescues himself and the girl before the vow is made, but to the mother it is a sacred obligation, and when he refuses to be bound by it, it becomes a sin for which she must atone. The atonement takes her to a shrine high up in the mountains where a storm overtakes her and she dies before her son can rescue her. After that the inexorable ways of conscience and custom leave no chance for simple happiness.

It is beautifully done, with tenderness and pity and even a good deal of gaiety, for the people are all exceedingly real and gaiety cannot be quenched in them for all the suffering that life forces on them. Everything about the picture seems just about right, and it stirs the kind of emotion that comes from a glimpse of actual living where passion spins the plot—all the human passions, big and little without the villain the poet says is not needed.—J. S. H.



Der Andere (The Other Self)

Adapted by Dr. Johannes Brandt from the play by Paul Linau, directed by Robert Wiene, photographed by Nikolas Farkas, produced by Terra Films, released by Tobis Forenfilms.

The Cast

Haller	Fritz Kortner
His sister	Hermine Sterler
Marion	Ursula van Diemen
Dr. Koehler	Eduard von Winterstein
Amalie Frieden	Kaethe von Nagy
Dickert	Heinrich George
Gruenstecht	Oskar Sima
Brenner	Julius Falkenstein

FEW pictures illustrate so clearly as do *Der Andere* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* the differences between the American and German treatments of a similar theme. One presents the serious treatment of a problem, its inception, progress and solution. The other takes the same problem, discards all its problematic attributes and presents the dish as an example of "showmanship," with the sensational irrelevancies played for all they can get. It so happens that this time the German combination of sincerity and skill results in a better picture than the American melange of skill and showmanship.

By its nature the theme of dual or split personality does not fall in the category of action photography. The title of this German *Jekyll and Hyde* affair gives an indication of that. It is with *The Other Self* or *The Man Within* that Robert Wiene, the director, and Fritz Kortner, the actor, are concerned. For their purposes straightforward cinematic narration was the obvious treatment, as distinct from the showy pyrotechnics of the Paramount-Mamoulian version.

Even in the writing *Der Andere* is a superior job, notable for its exclusion of non-essentials. At the trial of a murderer the defense is offered that the defendant, suffering from a split personality at the time of

the deed, did not know what he was doing. The Prosecutor, Haller, scoffs at this interpretation and demands the death sentence. By way of ironic corollary the Prosecutor himself, having broken down under the strain of the trial, falls victim to a similar mental disorder, under the effect of which he wanders out into the dives of Berlin, consorting with thieves and meeting the girl of the man he sent to the gallows.

The girl prevails upon the befuddled, drunken Haller to go and carry out her revenge upon the Prosecutor. One of the gangsters accompanies him. Back at home and amid familiar surrounding, Haller is shocked into his own true personality again. He finds himself still accompanied by the gangster, who proposes to blackmail him. Psychiatrists isolate the cause of Haller's breakdown and cure him.

The only part of that which is not handled in accordance with the best methods of sound-cinematography is the almost final scene, showing three medical men gathered around a table discussing Haller's problem and the best way to treat it. This scene, in which the limited action is mere stage-director embellishment, could just as well have been conveyed by the sound-apparatus alone, without the aid of the camera, and therefore stands out in its weakness from the more soundly cinematic nature of the rest of the film. Psychological terms and their interpreters do not lend themselves with great facility to pictorial interpretation.

Of importance is the fact that the transformations from Haller to his other self and back again are not accomplished by the imaginative virtuosity of camera and makeup men, but by no more than a change of coat, a rumpling of hair and of tie and an alteration of expression. It is the fact that there is so little difference between the two beings that is the true dramatic kernel of the *Jekyll and Hyde* theme, rather than the conception that the second personality must be some horrible Neanderthal abortion snorting about with a wicked gleam of sadistic carnality in its eyes. Fritz Kortner, who—excellent

though he is at makeup where makeup really helps—does his acting from within and not by means of superficial decorations, is little short of superb. In fact, Kortner is one of the best actors on the screen today, the world over, and any picture he is in is worth seeing from the mere fact of his being in it. The rest of the cast are excellent.

J. A. T.

Broken Lullaby

Adapted by Reginald Berkeley from the play "The Man I Killed" by Maurice Rostand, directed by Ernst Lubitsch, screen play by Ernest Vajda and Sampson Raphaelson, photographed by Victor Milner, produced and distributed by Paramount.

The Cast

Dr. Holderlin.....	Lionel Barrymore
Elsa	Nancy Carroll
Paul	Phillips Holmes
Walter Holderlin.....	Tom Douglas
Mrs. Holderlin.....	Louise Carter
Schultz	Lucien Littlefield
Anna	Zasu Pitts

ON the one hand is Ernst Lubitsch—a knowing and skilful director since many years ago—and Victor Milner, a knowing and skilful man with a camera, with all Paramount's superior technical forces behind them. On the other is a drama, adapted none too brilliantly from a play by Maurice Rostand, which never seems quite sure about just what forces are at work in its conflicts. Sum total, a motion picture whose effect depends entirely on what you are looking for in a motion picture that intends—and pretends—to be sincere and serious.

It goes this way: On the first anniversary of Armistice Day victorious cannons boom and victorious bells peal in celebration, and shell-shocked soldiers in hospitals scream in agony at the noise. Soldiers with two legs march triumphantly, and soldiers with only one lean on their crutches on the side-lines. Glory is given to God in the great churches by officers whose chests

glitter with medals, whose sword-scabbards gleam dully in a row along the ends of the pews. And when the music and the shaking of incense is over, a boy who has been a French soldier goes to the confessional, seeking some peace from the remorse that is torturing him for a German boy he killed during the fighting.

The priest has no comfort for him, but a sight of the Virgin Mother suggests that maybe if he went to Germany, and saw the German boy's mother, and she forgave him—

In Germany the father and mother of Walter Holderlin, and his fiancée, Elsa, are still grieving over their loss. They are gentle, kindly people, but the war, and the special suffering it has brought to them, have filled them with hatred for the French. When Paul, the French boy, comes to call, hatred is what greets him. But when they find he has been to Walter's grave and left flowers there they assume that the boys, both music students before they were soldiers, had been friends before their countries became enemies. So Paul is taken into the family and loved, and he dares not make the confession he came to make or ask the forgiveness his sensitive soul so needs.

Life in the Holderlin house is completely changed by Paul's being there, unintentionally and unwillingly taking their son's place. The old doctor becomes ashamed of how he stood and cheered when his boy marched away to fight and kill—he turns against all fighting and killing, and preaches his convictions to his still hostile fellow townsmen, who resent the presence of a Frenchman in their midst.

And Paul is still unhappy. He is there under false pretenses and wants to make his confession and leave—or leave without confessing. But Elsa has guessed his trouble. She persuades him to stay, keep silent and be a second son to the old people, and the pictures fades out to the strains of "Traumerei" as Paul plays, more and more unhesitatingly, on Walter's long-silent vio-

lin and Elsa finally joins him from the piano in a hopeful duet.

So a picture that began with brilliant satire ends with sentimental sacrifice to sad, sweet music, and leaves a feeling that something important that started out to be said has evaporated in a scene of bravura Barrymore acting and a wet-eyed happy ending. There have been beautifully photographed scenes — their beauty calls attention to itself so noticeably that one becomes conscious of looking at nothing but pictorial beauty at times. There has been the famous Lubitsch "touch," admirable and effective but no more so than when put to the service of the less pretentious Chevalier films. The story has told itself for the most part in excellent cinematic terms, depending on solid motion picture making for its most effective parts and not upon spoken words—which is fortunate, for the spoken words provided were often written in a style little short of painful. Mr. Lubitsch knows how to use the motion picture camera, and add sound in a way that is really an addition.

The film's chief message seems to be that death can cause much grief, which is something that has been said often before, and poignantly.—J. S. H.

Book-Marks

THREE pictures which have been rated high by the Committees of the National Board, two of which received reviews in the Exceptional Photoplays Department of recent issues of this Magazine, have had book-mark material prepared for them by the Cleveland Public Library. As outstanding films worthy of community support and tie-up activity they have been given this special attention by the Cleveland Library. We are pleased to have these book-marks from Miss Marilla W. Freeman who is Librarian of the Main Library, and reprint from them the suggested related books:

AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY MINUTES

Read About Adventures in the Lands Visited by
Douglas Fairbanks on His Magic Carpet

STORIES OF 'ROUND-THE-WORLD HOPS

Verne—"Around the World in Eighty Days"
Wells and Jorgensen—"Jumping Meridians"
Post and Gatty—"Around the World in Eight Days"
Wells—"Around the World in Twenty-eight Days"; by
Linton Wells

FOLLOW THE SUN

Franck—"A Vagabond Journey Around the World"
Halliburton—"Royal Road to Romance"
Ketchum—"Follow the Sun"
Keyserling—"Travel Diary of a Philosopher"
Marshall—"Vagabond de Luxe"
Roosevelt—"Cleared for Strange Ports"
Thomas—"The First World Flight"
Walter—"The World on One Leg"
Waugh—"Hot Countries"
Wells—"Adventure"; by Carverth Wells

ARROWSMITH

Interesting Books Suggested by the Photoplay
Based on Sinclair Lewis' Famous Novel

DOCTORS IN FICTION

Lewis—"Arrowsmith"
Ashton—"Dr. Serocold"
Deeping—"Roper's Row"
Deland—"Dr. Lavendar's People"
Douglas—"Magnificent Obsession"
Gibbs—"Hidden City"
Glaspell—"Glory of the Conquered"
MacLaren—"A Doctor of the Old School"
Young—"My Brother Jonathan"

FAMOUS MEDICAL MEN

Eckstein—"Noguchi"
Finger—"David Livingstone; Explorer and Prophet"
Lambert—"Medical Leaders from Hippocrates to Osler"
Munthe—"The Story of San Michele"
Reid—"The Great Physician; a Short Life of Sir William Osler"
Stanley—"How I Found Livingstone"
Vallery-Radot—"Life of Pasteur"

FRONTIERS OF MEDICINE

DeKruif—"The Microbe Hunters"
Fishbein—"Frontiers of Medicine" (in "Biology of Human Affairs" by East)
Hartzog—"Triumphs of Medicine"
Tobey—"Riders of the Plagues"

BEN-HUR

A Dramatic Presentation of the Life of Jesus, the Christ,
and of Ben Hur, a Prince of Jerusalem
Wallace—"Ben Hur, a Tale of the Christ"
Byrne—"Brother Saul"

THE HOLY LAND

Bell—"The Spell of the Holy Land"
Fosdick—"A Pilgrimage to Palestine"
Hyamson—"Palestine Old and New"
Speakman—"Hilltops in Galilee"

ROME—ITS PEOPLE AND HISTORY

Boak—"History of Rome to 565 A.D."
Champney—"Romance of Imperial Rome"
Ferrero—"Characters and Events of Roman History"
Baker—"Tiberius Caesar"
Ferrero—"Women of the Caesars"
McDaniel—"Roman Private Life"

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Barton—"Jesus of Nazareth"
Mathews—"A Life of Jesus"
Austin—"A Small Town Man"
Rihbany—"Syrian Christ"

PLAYS

Don Marquis—"The Dark Hours"
Ehrman—"Jesus; a Passion Play"
Kennedy—"The Terrible Meek"
Masefield—"The Trial of Jesus"

The Washington Bicentennial

ALL thoughts are at this time upon the Washington Bicentennial celebrating the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of George Washington. The Bicentennial Commission began to function early in 1930, making advance plans for a nationwide observance of the event so significant in American history.

The President of the United States is chairman of the Commission and both Houses of Congress have representatives on it. Other members are persons prominent in American cultural, industrial and financial life and noted historians.

Different departments were organized to take charge of the work, among them a Convention Department, a Library Department, a Juvenile Department and a Woman's Department.

This latter department prepared a series of lecture programs for the use of women's clubs, patriotic organizations, educational institutions, et cetera. Forty-eight papers were written supplementing these twelve programs. Mrs. Bertha Taylor Voorhorst, author, librarian and research student, having a contact with the National Board over a long period of years, who wrote many of these papers, says: "In the research necessary for the preparation of these papers, we found so many contradicting accounts of legendary and even actual history that we made it a point to consult original sources in so far as possible, using the Diaries of George Washington and the extracts from his writings as assembled by the Manuscript Department of the Library of Congress; also, military journals and diaries of officers of the Revolution and their contemporaries."

Mrs. Voorhorst was also assigned to special research relating to the historical scenes woven into the pageants, prepared for the occasion. Of these she writes: "This has been most interesting although most exacting work, sometimes requiring days to determine the names, personality, characteristics and costumes of the charac-

ters to be featured in a particular scene. For instance, there is no record, so far as can be discovered, of the list of officers to whom George Washington bade farewell at Fraunces' Tavern in New York City, on the 4th of December, 1783. General Knox and two or three others are mentioned as having been among those present, and it is estimated that there was something over forty, all told. It was only by the process of elimination that we were able to compile a fairly accurate list of those who might have been there. It was necessary to ascertain what officers were certainly elsewhere, the army records showing that some were stationed in the South, and others at distant points. This meant a lot of checking and rechecking.

"It was also quite a problem to ascertain who might consistently be included in the lists of persons present at the Inaugural Ball, but there were more comprehensive records for that to help us out. We know that Martha Washington was *not* there, but some of the staff felt we might be privileged by dramatic license to have her represented."

A further interesting phase of historical research was in the preparation of a chart on the "Origin of Our Union." Aside from the pictorial maps, it shows a number of scenes connected with the discovery, settlement, international rivalries, and the battle for Independence; also the evolution of the Flag, closing with the ratification of the Constitution and George Washington taking the oath of office as President.

Of most interest to us especially is the fact that the motion picture has been utilized as having an important function in this country-wide observance, reaching as it does such a large public. The life of Washington has been filmed as a feature of the Bicentennial Celebration by the Eastman Teaching Films, Inc., under the sponsorship of the Bicentennial Commission and with the cooperation of the United States Government. The picture titled

George Washington, His Life and Times, has been made historically accurate in every detail, and many sequences have been made on the very spots where the incidents depicted actually occurred in the days of George Washington. For the first time in its history, Mount Vernon has been filmed in motion pictures. This was granted through the courtesy of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union, the present owners of Washington's beautiful home on the Potomac. Pieces of furniture which Washington used and clothes actually worn in his day by his associates all add to the atmosphere of the film. The picture is made in four parts, any or all of which are suitable for use by schools and organizations in general, and is adapted to use in large or small auditoriums.

A Washington picture for theatrical use has been made by Vitaphone, a subsidiary of Warner Brothers Pictures, Inc. It is entitled *Washington, the Man and the Capitol*.^{*} It, too, is a picture made with Government cooperation and has been endorsed and recommended by the Bicentennial Commission. Mr. Clarence Whitehill who plays the part of George Washington is a member of the Metropolitan Opera Company. The picture was shown, as a special courtesy of Warner Brothers, to the guests at our recent annual Conference attending the Review Committee session in the Warner private theatre and there received the heartiest praise. We hope that you all will see it at your theatres during the Bicentennial Celebration and suggest that if you do not you ask for it because it should have the special interest and support of all those interested in better films.

In addition to these specially prepared films there are a number of other pictures appropriate for this observance period. We have compiled a recent list of patriotic pictures listing such pictures as: *Alexander Hamilton*, *Shrines of American History*, *War of the American Revolution* and *The Yale Chronicles of America Series*, which

^{*}*Reviewed on page 23.*

includes *The Declaration of Independence*, *Eve of the Revolution*, *The Gateway of the West* and *Yorktown*. The complete list with titles and distributors can be secured from the National Board of Review for 10c in stamps.

Reviewing Our Annual Meeting

(Continued from page 5)

Board of Review the Conference has expressed a strong disapproval of censorship of the screen both in practice and in principle; now therefore

'BE IT RESOLVED, that we reaffirm our opposition to any and all State and legal forms of censorship and particularly to any attempt to translate the institution of censorship into the form of a Federal statute.

Washington Bicentennial

BE IT RESOLVED that this Conference join in the resolution proposed by the Washington Bicentennial Commission commemorating the birth of our first president, George Washington.

Do You Play Bridge?

THE fourth annual bridge party of the National Board of Review will be held on Saturday afternoon, April 23rd, at the Hotel Pennsylvania. We give this advance word and urge those of you who plan to attend to make your reservations early so that you may be assured of a table. The prizes from prominent screen celebrities will be announced in the April issue of the Magazine. Tickets are \$1.50 each—\$6.00 a table. Contract or Auction is in order. Sidney S. Lenz will again be present to assist in directing the play.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIED INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. *Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).*

Mature audience. *Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).*

Junior matinee. *Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.*

***—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.**

CAIN—Directed by Leon Poirrier. *Talking Picture Epics, 6 reels.* Made in Madagascar, this picture shows a ship's stoker who becomes a Robinson Crusoe—eventually he has a chance to go back to civilization and stoking, but he decides to stay on his island with his native wife and children. Good and unusual idea with some excellent episodes, but with a generally poor scenario that leaves out many things one would like to see. *Mature audience.*

CHARLIE CHAN'S CHANCE—Novel by Earl Derr Biggers, directed by John Blystone, with a cast headed by Warner Oland. *Fox, 7 reels.* This detective story is like its predecessors in most respects, this time bringing the Chinese sleuth to New York, where things are briefly enlivened by an amusing Chinese Boy Scout. *Family audience.*

THE CHEYENNE CYCLONE—Adapted from the novel "Sage-brush Romeo" by Oliver Drake, directed by Armand Schaeffer, with a cast including Lane Chandler and Frankie Darro. *Willis Kent, 6 reels.* Good, clean Western, full of action and fast riding, and a very likeable and entertaining boy's part played by Frankie Darro. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

***EMMA**—Story by Frances Marion, directed by Clarence Brown, with a cast including Marie Dressler, Jean Hersholt and Richard Cromwell. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels.* Marie Dressler in one of her best-rounded parts, a loyal family housekeeper who brings up an inventor's children with the usual human rewards of gratitude and ingratitude. Very tearful in places, but Miss Dressler is at her best—which is about as good as the American screen has to offer. *Family audience.*

FILE NO. 113—Novel by Emile Gaboriau, directed by Chester M. Franklin, with a cast including Clara Kimball Young, Lew Cody and William Collier, Jr. *Hollywood Pictures, 7 reels.* The old detective classic, with M. Lecoq functioning enjoyably, screened in effective fashion. *Mature audience.*

THE FINAL EDITION—Screen story by Roy Chandlor, directed by Howard Higgin, with a cast including Mae Clark and Pat O'Brien. *Columbia, 7 reels.* Brisk melodrama with a good deal of suspense, combining the elements of a newspaper yarn and a murder mystery, in which a girl runs off with both the reportorial and detective honors. Good ordinary program picture. *Mature audience.*

FORBIDDEN—Screen story by Frank Capra and Jo Swerling, directed by Frank Capra, with a cast including Barbara Stanwyck, Adolphe Menjou and Ralph Bellamy. *Columbia, 9 reels.* A story of love sacrificed for the happiness of other people, sometimes deeply moving or exciting, sometimes over-theatrical. Barbara Stanwyck and Adolphe Menjou at their best. *Mature audience.*

THE GAY CABALLERO—Story by Tom Gill, directed by Alfred Werker, with a cast including George O'Brien, Victor McLaglen and Conchita Montenegro. *Fox, 6 reels.* A Mexican border story about a masked sort of Robin Hood who works to protect the poor peons against a lawless exploiter. A mild love story, some exciting and amusing fighting, and magnificent out-doors. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

***GYPSY BLOOD**—Adapted from Bizet's opera "Carmen," directed by Cecil Lewis, with a cast including Margaret Namara and Thomas Burke. *British International, 8 reels.* An excellent British production of the opera "Carmen" with spoken dialogue to carry along the story but using most of the music. The singing is unusually good and the acting of Margaret Namara as Carmen likewise—the rest up to the usual performances to be found in opera houses. An interesting and exciting picture. *Mature audience.*

THE HATCHET MAN—Adapted from the play by David Belasco and Ahmed Abdullah, directed by William A. Wellman, with a cast headed by Edward G. Robinson. *First National*, 8 reels. An interesting picture of Chinese tong warfare in San Francisco in which a young girl, at the death of her father, marries his friend who later saves her from folly. *Mature audience.*

***HELL DIVERS**—Story by Lt. Com. Frank Wead, directed by George Hill, with a cast including Wallace Beery and Clark Gable. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 12 reels. Simple but absorbing story of men in the Naval Air Forces. Made with the cooperation of the U. S. Navy the manoeuvres are authentic—the story has abundant laughs, thrills and moving heroism. Wallace Beery and Clark Gable are excellent at the head of a fine cast and the direction is remarkably good. *Family audience.*

HIGH PRESSURE—From the stage play "Hot Money" by Aben Candel, directed by Mervyn LeRoy, with a cast headed by William Powell. *Warner*, 7 reels. An amusing satire on the promoters of large corporations. The acting of William Powell is excellent, although one feels he is above the part. As the promoter of artificial rubber he almost finds himself in jail but is ready to promote the next thing that happens along. *Family audience.*

LAW AND ORDER—Novel by William R. Burnett, directed by Harry Conway, with a cast headed by Walter Huston. *Universal*, 7 reels. Peppy western drama with excellent acting by a cast composed entirely of men, in which a man with his three companions comes to a small Arizona settlement to bring law and order. *Family audience.*

LOVERS COURAGEOUS—Screen story by Fredrick Lonsdale, directed by Robert Z. Leonard, with a cast headed by Robert Montgomery and Madge Evans. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 8 reels. A love story pure and simple built along familiar lines but made agreeable by some very pleasant characters and dialogue. Robert Montgomery has one of his most likeable parts. *Family audience.*

THE MENACE—Novel by Edgar Wallace, directed by Roy William Neil, with a cast including H. B. Warner, Bette Davis and Walter Byron. *Columbia*, 7 reels. An Englishman is convicted of the murder of his father solely on the testimony of his step-mother but he escapes to America and is later able to prove his innocence. *Mature audience.*

***MICHAEL AND MARY**—From the play by A. A. Milne, directed by Victor Saville, with a cast including Herbert Marshall and Edna Best. *Universal*, 8 reels. An English production, well done and interesting. A girl who has been deserted by her husband, and the man she loves decide to marry and face life together. Not until their son is twenty-one does the ugly past reach out and threaten their happiness. *Mature audience.*

ONE MAN LAW—Screen story and direction by Lambert Hillyer, with a cast headed by Buck Jones. *Columbia*, 6 reels. Good western with plenty of excitement. A sheriff of a small town is framed by a crook from Chicago but is finally able to prove his innocence and loyalty. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PANAMA FLO—Screen story by Garret Fort, directed by Ralph Murphy, with a cast including Helen Twelvetrees, Charles Bickford and Robert Armstrong. *RKO-Pathé*, 8 reels. A colorful story of rough characters in a speakeasy and in South America. Dramatically and effectively acted with Helen Twelvetrees in the kind of part that seems to suit her best. *Mature audience.*

PRESTIGE—Story by Harry Harvey, directed by Tay Garnett, with a cast including Ann Harding, Melvyn Douglas and Adolphe Menjou. *RKO-Pathé*, 8 reels. The French maintaining the moral prestige of the white race in Indo-China by means of Ann Harding and Melvyn Douglas. The story is rather jumpy but the direction and camera work are unusually good. *Mature audience.*

THE SILENT WITNESS—From the stage play by Jack de Leon and Jack Celestin, directed by Marcel Varnel and R. L. Hough, with a cast including Lionel Atwill and Greta Nissen. *Fox*, 7 reels. British court-room drama in which a father tries to take upon himself the guilt of a murder which he believes to have been committed by his son. Not altogether convincing but the acting is good and there are some very effective episodes. *Mature audience.*

TAXI—Screen story by John Bright and Kubec Glassman, directed by Roy del Ruth, with a cast headed by James Cagney. *Warner*, 7 reels. Story of a feud between two taxi companies—a boy whose brother is killed by a leader of the rival company seeks revenge but his wife interferes with his plans. *Mature audience.*

***TOMORROW AND TOMORROW**—From the stage play by Philip Barry, directed by Richard Wallace, with a cast including Ruth Chatterton, Paul Lukas and Robert Ames. *Paramount*, 9 reels. Drama of a woman who is married to one man and loves another and her choice between love and duty, marked by excellent acting on the part of the principals. *Mature audience.*

***UNION DEPOT**—Screen story by Laurie, Fowler and Durkin, directed by Alfred E. Green, with a cast headed by Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. *First National*, 6 reels. First rate romantic melodrama directed with a lively vividness and precision, an excellent cast and brisk racy dialogue. The story is about a vagrant in a big railway station and the adventures that involve him with an actress, a counterfeiter and the police. *Mature audience.*

THE WOMAN COMMANDS—Screen story by Thilde Forster, directed by Paul L. Stein, with a cast including Pola Negri, Basil Rathbone

and Roland Young. *RKO-Pathé*, 9 reels. An incredible story of a little mythical European kingdom in which Pola Negri is a singer who becomes the queen. Miss Negri and Roland Young give it all the life they can but it will be interesting only to those who do not insist on human motives and actions in their romance. *Mature audience.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

Der Andere—7 rls.

(See page 15)

Mature audience.

Broken Lullaby—8 rls.

(See page 16)

Family audience.

Road to Life

(See page 10)

Family audience.

Zwei Menschen

(See page 14)

Mature audience.

SHORT SUBJECTS

ANY OLD PORT—*Laurel and Hardy, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 reels. The comedians as two sailors ashore, their adventures ending in a hilarious boxing match. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE BIRD STORE (Silly Symphony)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Not as original as some of the others of this series but still among the best of the cartoons. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BOB WHITE (Sportlight)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. The hunting of quail—the dogs are especially interesting. *Family audience.*

THE CHINATOWN MYSTERY (Scrappy Cartoon)—Funny cartoon but with skeletons and dragons that might be frightening to small children. *Family audience.*

COLLEGE GRAPPLERS (Sportlight)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. The training of college wrestlers. *Family audience.*

CURIOSITIES NO. 230—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Series of odd items. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

*DETECTIVES—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. A nature and drawing film especially good for juniors. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE DOOR OF ASIA (Vagabond Adventures)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Travelogue about China showing how the poor live. Particularly interesting to those who have read "The Good Earth." *Family audience.*

DUCKS AND DRAKES (Sportlight)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. The use of the blind and the decoys in duck shooting. *Family audience.*

ENDURANCE FLIGHT—*RKO-Radio*, 1 reel. A Liberty short story, well done and interesting of its type. *Mature audience.*

GHOST SHIPS—*Talking Picture Epics*, 1 reel. Beautiful memorial of the old sailing ships. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

GRANDMA'S PET (Oswald Cartoon)—*Universal*, 1 reel. The Lucky Rabbit dreams that his girl is Little Red Riding Hood and that he rescues her from the wolf. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE HIGH ANDES—*Talking Picture Epics*, 1 reel. Travel in the remote high spots of South America—interesting and instructive. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

HORACE HEIDT AND HIS CALIFORNIANS—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Orchestra number. *Family audience.*

IRELAND—MELODY ISLE (Traveltalks)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. Trip through Ireland with accompanying Irish songs. *Family audience.*

JAVANESE JOURNEYS—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Interesting travelogue. *Family audience.*

LONDON—CITY OF TRADITION (Traveltalks)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. Interesting trip through London. *Family audience.*

MICKEY'S HOLIDAY—*RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. Mickey and His Gang have lively adventures. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MICKEY'S TRAVELS—*RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. Mickey McGuire and His Gang have more adventures with a huge pack of dogs. Amusing. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 6—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Interesting review of events in different parts of the country. *Family audience.*

THE PIANO MOVER (Krazy Kat Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Another amusing adventure of Krazy Kat. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PRETTY PUPPIES—*Ford Sterling, Paramount*, 2 reels. Amusing comedy of an actress who makes a practice of falling off of her horse and marrying her rescuer for publicity. *Family audience.*

ROCKETEERS (Tom and Jerry Cartoon)—*RKO-Radio*, 1 reel. These two start for the moon and land at the bottom of the sea. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

A ROMEO MONK (Aesop Fable)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Wooing time in the jungle. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NOS. 4 & 5—*Columbia*, 1 reel each. Screen stars at work and play. *Family audience.*

SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 7—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Flappers in the gay nineties; Wallace Berry as an elephant trainer twenty years ago; an old melodrama with Henry B. Walthall. *Family audience.*

SEALSKINS—*Zasu Pitts, Thelma Todd, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 reels. Funny farce in which two girls try to recover a stolen coat. *Family audience.*

SELF CONDEMNED—*RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. Short but interesting Nick Harris detective story. *Mature audience.*

SHOW ME THE WAY TO GO HOME (Bouncing Ball Cartoon)—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Amusing song number. *Family audience.*

SLIM FIGURING (Sportlight)—*RKO-Pathe*, 1 reel. Female athletes playing baseball, basketball, lacrosse, and rowing and swimming. *Family audience.*

SPEED IN THE GAY NINETIES—*Andy Clyde, Educational*, 2 reels. An inventor believes so strongly in fast autos and flying machines that everyone thinks he is crazy. *Family audience.*

SPEEDWAY (Sportreel)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Fast automobile driving. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SPORTSLANTS NO. 4—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Ted Husing tells of hockey, hurling and soccer. *Family audience.*

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 16—*Universal*, 1 reel. Strange facts interestingly depicted. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SWEET JENNIE LEE (Bouncing Ball Cartoon)—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Clever song cartoon. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SWIFT JUSTICE—*RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. Nick Harris tells a true story—well done and interesting. *Family audience.*

THE TABASCO KID—*Charley Chase, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 reels. Funny skit in which the comedian has to be a fiction cowboy. *Family audience.*

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*WASHINGTON, THE MAN AND THE CAPITOL—*Clarence Whitehill, Vitaphone*, 1 reel. A splendid picture showing George Washington first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen, and the beautiful city which stands as a memorial to the first President of the United States. An instructive as well as interesting picture. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

WIDE OPEN SPACES—*Dorothy Sebastian, Ned Sparks, RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. A burlesque of *The Girl of the Golden West* done by the Masquers of Hollywood which means it is crowded with familiar popular actors. Very funny. *Family audience.*

How the Specialized Motion Picture is Being Developed

(Continued from page 9)

you have set for this meeting. We may not have it. The children of today are not having it. I speak at the close of this meeting to a school of very wealthy children where they can have it. That school is ready to make the investment. Must our children in the great public schools go on without this wonderful addition to our teaching when we want them to know the other peoples of the world, to learn to have an intelligent sympathy for them, to work with them? If this generation cannot, the next generation will know the world better.

THE Burgomaster of Brussels has set out to abolish one of the nuisances of the day—the queues in front of the cinemas. The public has always enjoyed the right of forming a long line, in front of the gallery and pit entrances of theatres, but the theatres are few and far between and the habit has not greatly interfered with pedestrians. Cinemas, however, have sprung up everywhere; they begin early and finish late, and the queues stretch far into the street.

Things have reached such a pass that the Burgomaster has been forced to post notices forbidding queues and laconically instructing cinema managers to arrange matters otherwise.

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of the

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To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE



Vol. VII, No. 3

March, 1932

What Is A "Better Film"?

Children and the
Motion Picture

Critical Comment

Better Films Forum

*Published monthly, except July and August, by the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures*

70 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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What Is a "Better Film"?

One of the guests of honor at our Annual Luncheon was the noted composer and music critic Deems Taylor. Because of his wide experience in the field of criticism what he had to say regarding motion pictures was most eagerly and enthusiastically received by the audience and we take this opportunity to quote from it.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

I speak as an authority for nothing at all. I am only a "fan." I just go to the movies. I have always gone and always adored them although I dislike most of them. But I keep on going like a friend of mine whose father used to smoke a certain brand of cigars, and the son asked him, "Why do you buy these things and insist upon smoking them?" And he said, "Well, my boy, some day I am going to get a good one." I think if this country needs anything more than a five-cent cigar, it needs an organization that for once in our history will be affirmative and not reformatory or deformatory. In this country particularly we seem to have the naive idea that whenever anything happens that is susceptible to improvement, the best way to improve it is to get together and pass a few laws about it and get somebody at a salary to suppress most of it.

Censorship has never worked and I do not think it ever will because censorship arouses the greatest of all human instincts, and that is curiosity. If you do not want people to see a bad film, do not talk about

it. The experience of booksellers, of book censors, of picture censors, of play censors, has always been the same—that the sure way to sell anything in large quantities is to notify people that they must not see it or hear it or buy it. I think censorship has done more to promote the presentation of bad plays and the seeing of bad plays and bad pictures than any other force in our civilization.

In the first place, I do not really know what bad is, and I do not think you do either. I think a picture that is bad is one that makes you want to crawl under the seat every once in a while and that may be because something immoral is going on or because somebody is waving an American flag or talking about his mother at the wrong time. I think a sentimental sloppy picture in bad taste is five times as immoral as a picture where a woman has a baby without a father.

Some one has just said to me, "There is just one thing I would like you to do and that is define a 'better' film." I admit that is an order. Anyone's definition is as good as any other's. My idea of a good film is a film that is filled with human beings. The average so-called film in bad taste, bad morals and everything else, I think you will find is filled with people who are dubs. I saw a picture the other night that I thought was thoroughly bad. It was a picture presented totally

without sympathy, without truth, every scene in it was a lie. It was sentimental, it was in bad taste, it was bad morals, it was bad patriotism, it was everything else. There was not a human person in it. A picture of that sort is bound to be bad. I do not know what its reception has been but if it were the most moral thing in the world, it would still be bad because it has no connection with life or human beings.

You get a book or play that is inhabited by human beings and you have a chance to understand them, to sympathize with them. You do not want to break out and do as they do any more than you want to do as your next door neighbor does, though you know him so well. But you get these pictures that are neither fish, flesh, fowl or good red herring and they propagate because the inference is that is the way human beings behave.

So I am glad to see a crowd of people who are not putting their fingers to their lips and who are not saying you must not do this or that, but are just standing up and saying, "That is good. Go to see that." That is the only kind of criticism that is worth anything.

If I may be biographical for just a minute: I have been a music critic for ten years and retired for four and thought things over. When I came back I reached a momentous decision, and that is, that I would not waste my time and space criticizing adversely events that were not worth criticizing; I would go to concerts and events that I thought were worth discussion and after three days' thought I would discuss them. I made this decision believing that the surest way to perpetuate the others was to talk about them. So that if instead of saying "hush" to the bad films and "let us not have that and this," we all do what you are doing and say, "Here is something that we think is good and never mind what we think is bad; we don't know, and you don't know and opinions differ, but this we do know is good"—we will get somewhere in pictures.

So I have no suggestions to offer. You know your business and you are doing it, and all I can say is "Bravo!"

What of the Horror Picture?

As a sane comment on the currently much discussed subject of the so-called "gruesome film" we think it worth while to reprint the following from the editorial page of a recent issue of the New York Times.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

IT is natural for a man or woman of imagination to feel that an adult may find these films more absurd than moving, while still fearing the shock to young and tender sensibilities. The business men of the movies, who keep a careful finger on the public pulse, know that many parents and organizations of parents and educators are refusing to allow children in their care to go to wildly sensational films. Publications devoted to children's interests, list such pictures under a ban. Recently Mr. St. John Ervine made an analysis in The London Observer of the reports of teachers and social workers on children's reactions to all kinds of movies. It seems plain to him that the children, encouraged to give their impressions, memories and dreams after seeing some of these melodramas, are made nervous and unstable emotionally.

Sensible people cannot help speculating about such things and trying to do something to prevent injury to young minds if the danger exists. But they should not decide too quickly how the pictures impress children. A child is willing to tell a horrible dream which he sees he was expected to have. Few grown people are able to see anything through a child's eyes. The very scenes which they imagine will haunt a child for days may have almost no meaning for him, while something like a Wild West chase, seemingly innocent and comic to adults, will plague him for a long time. It would be a satisfaction to many parents and

(Continued on page 13)

Children and the Motion Picture

By MRS. HELEN S. MACPHERSON

This topic was treated so authoritatively at our last Conference by Mrs. MacPherson based upon her varied studies and contacts that we are glad to present it here to our many readers interested in the subject. Mrs. MacPherson was a teacher in the schools of Hartford, Conn., a social service worker at the Mansfield State Training School, a school psychologist, supervisor of special classes working with the problem child, taught for several years in the Yale summer school and is now Chief Probation Officer of the Juvenile Court of Hartford. In these capacities she has had excellent opportunity to study the child and the effect of motion pictures upon him.
—EDITOR'S NOTE.

IT is a very healthy sign that such a group as the National Board of Review is interested in the betterment of moving pictures and an attempt to pass on to the public at large a fair unbiased account of their opinions and findings.

As a teacher, social worker, psychologist and juvenile probation officer, I have spent all of my adult years in studying the child and everything which affects his development, both mental and physical. Naturally I have given the motion pictures a great deal of thought and study since they loom very large on the horizon of a child's life, and play a decided part in his development. It is impossible to make a general statement that all moving pictures are detrimental to children or are of the utmost value. However, we are all agreed that everyone is interested in the happiness of children and delinquency causes unhappiness. Delinquent children are not happy children and American ideals and standards are, for the most part, shaped with but one end in view; that the children of this nation shall have a happy, carefree life sheltered from all knowledge of life's unpleasantness and unhappiness. However, we know that the literal fulfillment of this idea is not possible. We cannot protect or shelter the child from all of the world's hard knocks and disagreeableness, and perhaps it would not be advisable to do this. But we can in some measure protect him from an unnecessary knowledge of a great deal of the sordidness of life and give him a few years of carefree childhood.

This group is at the present time doing a great deal toward this in having as one of its aims an attempt to bring the best pictures to the attention of the public through the publication of a photoplay guide based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review.

In considering this subject, there are many factors of the situation to which we must give due reflection and thought.

First, the love of story is age old. Man has always turned to stories for his entertainment. History tells us that the earliest records were told and sung by minstrels who wandered over the countryside reciting folklore. Our ancestors employed symbols and pictures scratched on stone to tell their stories of love and hate, of happiness and frustration. Today, the silver screen is the picture book of the ages, unfolding before our eyes scenes and stories surpassing the imagination of the majority of the spectators. As a result they have made an indelible impression upon the American home-life. "Mother, tell us a story," has been changed for, "Mother, let's go to the movies." The movies are animated story books satisfying the story wish more rapidly and more completely with no drain upon the imagination of the hearer.

Second, the movies are an important factor in our community life today. They are an established fact and we must face that fact. There is no doubt that they are a great power and influence and call from every corner. They make their appeal through the ear and the eye. They utilize the sense of hearing and the sense of sight. The same senses are in some instances the same methods as the foremost educators are using in our schools today.

Third, practically all children of all classes feel that it is their natural right to go to the movies. It is no longer a special privilege, and the frequency with which they attend is determined only by home environ-

ment, parental supervision, directed interests and financial circumstances. Children form a large percentage of the audience. For the sake of discussion, we may roughly divide them into three groups: First, the child whose parents provide him with an opportunity of using his leisure time wisely, giving him out-of-door life, books and games. Second, the ordinary child in middle class circumstances whose parents depend upon him to keep out of trouble and to plan his own games and pleasures. Third, the child in unfortunate, unhappy circumstances whose parents are doing nothing constructive for him and whose only outlet from the dismal realities of life is in the glamorous moving pictures. It is usually from this group that come the boys who tell me that they got the idea from the movies of forming a gang, breaking and entering a house, or carrying guns.

In the Juvenile Court I have had children appear before me for whom the desire for the movies was greater than any moral force in the community. Recently we had three boys who were arrested in an attempt to gain entrance into a moving picture theatre. They had learned, in the course of their prowling through alleys, that a window in the rear of one of the theatres was boarded up. They therefore proceeded to a local store and stole a saw, one of them slipping it under his coat. They then made their way through the alley, up over a roof and sawed their way into a small unused room in the rear of the theatre. I have had children break and enter stores to find money to go to the movies. Recently one of the most pathetic cases that has come to my attention was the case of a little nine year old girl who practiced prostitution so that she might have money for the movies. In the course of the conversation with her, she turned to me and said, "Of course we have to have money because we've got to go to the movies."

Fourth, background, experience and training limit and influence the impressions the child receives. What we see in a picture or

get from it is determined by our background and experiences. Adults with wider knowledge, more experience and greater training can judge for themselves. Children are not so fortunate. They sit in a darkened theatre amongst an audience tense with emotion and watch a thrilling story unfold before their eyes. Since every experience and every contact makes some impression on the individual, and in some way changes his personality, only the child's more limited experience and training can determine what impressions are to be the most lasting. Children note and are impressed by details which we take for granted. Parents should be the best judges of what their children should see, and yet parents cannot visit every film before the children see it. In the cases of neighborhood theatres, the programs change every two days and in this busy world it is impossible for the parents to visit the theatre every day. Titles give little or no help in the selection of pictures and are frequently misleading. It is here that groups such as this may assist, in viewing the pictures for the parents and passing on to them expert information as to their suitability.

Recently there came to our attention a group of boys who were involved in a number of petty thefts. Let us call the leader "Charlie." Our investigation showed that the parents sympathized with him and would fight for him if necessary, but no intelligent supervision or help could be expected of them. The neighborhood situation, however, was most unusual and unfortunate. His family enjoyed a reputation in the neighborhood which prejudiced everyone against Charlie. Gregarious by nature, he felt very keenly his unnatural and unhappy position.

However, the escapade was unusual because of an interesting phase in the situation. While these boys broke into many places and took something from each place, they took nothing of intrinsic value and nothing which they needed or could use. This element made it rather difficult to un-

derstand the reason for their escapade. Eventually, however, we learned from one boy that they liked to play "phantom" and in running down this clue we discovered that they had seen a moving picture in which the leading player was "The Phantom." When I talked with Charlie, who proved to be the instigator, he said the phantom was "a mysterious man who went about the city frightening people and killing them." Of course he assured me that he had no intention of killing anyone but that he and the rest of them made believe that they were mysterious men and trouped about the city, going from place to place trying windows and doors and, when they found one open, would reach in and take something—a half can of dried-up paint, a rusty screw driver, and other things of no value. They had many secrets. They contrived an unusual way of getting into their cellar, discovered places between the rafters in the attic and holes in the cellar floor where they could hide their loot. A short time later neighbors were alarmed by anonymous letters which they found in their mailboxes in the morning, warning them to watch their step, to be careful, et cetera, each one signed by "The Black Cobra." The escapade was traced to Charlie's door and again the movies had fired his imagination and furnished him with a suggestion.

In these instances, the movies found fertile ground and gave him an idea. Undoubtedly the movies affect the juvenile mind, but whether for good or for evil depends on the kind of picture as well as the child's background and experiences. His interpretation and acceptance of the actions in the picture depend in a large measure upon his own life, its deficiencies and the opportunity he has for a legitimate outlet of his energies and natural desires.

Fifth, children will go to see any picture rather than stay at home. However, they like laughter, adventure, movement and action. Pictures which make definite impressions are the dramatic and the spectacular. They do not care for conversational dramas

or complicated situations. Children like pictures which find a definite, immediate reaction within themselves—the thrilling picture which makes them shout and urge the characters on; the comedy which makes them laugh hilariously; the mystery picture which makes them shudder and fearful as they sit alert and tense on the edge of their seats, their eyes glued to the screen, oblivious to all about them.

Sixth, there are more people going to the moving pictures every day than there are people taking books out of the library. Parents exercise some control over the books their children see and read, why not over the pictures they see? They would not allow their children to read some of the modern, sophisticated novels they themselves enjoy, yet do they do anything to prevent their seeing the picturization of that novel at the local theatre? Much thought is expended in purchasing books for children and books are recognized as a necessary element in the child's development. Normally life unfolds slowly as a child develops in years and intelligence, but the movies are plunging children directly into the sphere of adult life. The movies are attempting to appeal to all ages through the same medium and when the pictures exert a disastrous influence upon the child it is to some extent because of the parents' inability to meet the situation. In view of the fact that children to such a large extent fill the motion picture houses it is necessary that some recognition of this factor be taken; that the producers lend an ear to the clamor of the intelligent parent who wants pictures which are entirely free from insinuations, questionable situations and salacious inferences. Frequently when an excellent picture is produced and is exhibited, we find that it is combined on the same program with another picture at the other extreme of the scale. That, I realize, is a question for the manager and I hope very soon to see the day when they will realize such practices are not going to be tolerated.

The movies have great possibilities. I

believe that the "talkies" are going to do much to benefit the English language, bringing about a uniform pronunciation throughout the nation and more grammatical speech. I have already indicated that the movies have a very large and definite part in the life of the community and their possibilities are practically unlimited. The child accepts the social standard which appeals to him and provides him with the approval of his group. Children quickly grasp the thought behind the unspoken word, the smile, the shrug or other gesture. It is possible for the motion pictures to open up to the starved imagination of the child the wealth of color, of spectacular adventures and of emotional outlet within the realms of art, science and religion. I have found the majority of the children before the Juvenile Court are ignorant of any appreciation of history, literature or religion. Youth has creative desires. An exclusive diet of gang murders, sex affairs or lurid dramas is conducive to similar misdemeanors, yet how many of these might be avoided by contact with better things! When I advocate such a line of procedure, however, I do not mean that the picture should preach. We in the Court often find that the delinquent from the "good" home is usually an irritated and exasperated young person who has been preached to and preached at to the limit of his endurance. I realize that this is a very large order, but not too large for the leaders of one of the greatest industries of all time to cope with.

The movies offer an escape to children and adults alike from the drab realities of life. They are not only a source of entertainment, but they provide an outlet for the hidden dreams and aspirations of starved personalities. The other side of that picture is that they frequently make these starved persons dissatisfied with their own lives and personalities. When such dissatisfaction is expressed in terms of ambition to legitimately better their condition, the movies are a power for good, but when they show these poor unfortunates an illegitimate mode of

escape to what they foolishly believe is a better situation, they are a force for evil. In this connection, we must remember that children have not the wisdom to weigh the real and the unreal, the probable with the improbable. To them it is all a picture of true life. Through their contact with the movies, children have become exposed to life in many of its phases that is far beyond their years. They love the movies because their playworld has been unfolded before their eyes and the land of make-believe has been made real. However, it is up to us to make it possible for this land of make-believe to be the child's world and, insofar as possible, to protect him from coming in contact with a knowledge of adult experiences, to save for him the few precious years of childhood, untouched by contact with the shadows of problems filling adult life. It seems to me that in this connection, an organization such as this can be of inestimable value to the children of this nation by making available to every parent a classification or idea of the kind of pictures which are going to be presented at their theatre and in persuading the leaders of this industry that even as there are books for juveniles so there should be pictures for juveniles exclusively and not pictures which, although they have children and animal characters, have adult plots. Children need pictures in which they are the central figures, in which the theme and action are the words and actions of children. Then the most important phase is up to the parents. Parents must take advantage of these opportunities and see that their children attend the houses where pictures appropriate for them are being shown. For the present we should control the situation by educating the producer and the public and by encouraging selective and discriminating choices.



EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Critical Comment

Under this heading pictures will be discussed that in the judgment of the Exceptional Photoplays Committee do not gain the rating of Exceptional yet possess qualities that we have found our readers are interested in having talked about.

Mr. von Sternberg's Latest Film

THERE is probably no picture director in America more fascinating to watch or more likely to stir up violent argument than Josef von Sternberg. Ever since he got both the intelligent and the intelligentsia all excited with his first film, *The Salvation Hunters*, he has been able to make himself a center of discussion, often a storm center. Is he an artist, or merely arty?

Those who claim the first have a good deal on their side. He made *Underworld*, probably the best of the gangster films during the speechless era, and *The Case of Lena Smith*, and he made *Morocco*, which was of immense importance in developing the sound film, cutting out mere chatter and putting the microphone where it belonged, to add significant sound to the story-telling camera. Not too many directors have that much to their credit.

Von Sternberg undeniably has the "picture" sense, just as real writers have a "word" sense. What he seems to be indifferent to is significant material. It is probably not unfair to him to guess that *An American Tragedy* was not material of his own choice. He was not at home with it, at any rate, and though under his hands it turned out better as a picture than it had

been as a play, the Dreiser theme and characters were not the stuff for the cinema without throwing away the Dreiser framework and creating it all over again. What von Sternberg takes to more readily and enthusiastically is romance and melodrama, if his last two Dietrich films are any indication.

The latest one, *Shanghai Express*, is as much of a pasteboard antique as any of Sardou so far as plot is concerned. It is built of many typical Sardou contraptions: uniforms, a gaudy heroine, suave lechery, torture, stabbing—all headed for a general final massacre that is averted by a sudden and unconvincing shift to a happy ending. It goes against the Sardou tradition only in having a villain who is the most intelligent and understandable figure in the whole story.

With such a tale to tell—and supplied, as it is, with some very unadmirable dialogue—it is not surprising that Mr. von Sternberg has not managed to be convincing, or even always interesting, with his characters and what they do. The Shanghai Lily, though played by the lovely Dietrich, is a rather pallid creation compared with the ladies of *The Blue Angel* and *Morocco*—the enigmatic lure is not so po-

tent, the elusive air of mystery not so magical. Something of magnetism in her seems dimmed, so that one feels too often that her acting is mere posing. Her stolid British lover, too, for whom she prays and sacrifices, has something unintelligible about him, a vagueness singularly puzzling in a part so clean cut in its surface outlines. Only the Eurasian rebel leader, admirably played by Warner Oland, and the Chinese harlot of Anna May Wong, suddenly thrusting a bit of hot and vivid life into the proceedings, seem definite and vital.

But if the plot is machine-made and tawdry, the atmosphere is quite another story. Here the director's gifts shine with magnificent brilliance. Picture and sound combine magically to create a sense of a train gathering its heterogeneous load of people in the Peiping railway station and steaming along through China on its way to Shanghai. Whatever preposterous things people may be doing or saying, our eyes and ears are always telling us of a journey through a foreign land, suggesting the possibility of strange and exciting happenings. Continually all the attendant elements of the story promise marvels that the story itself never supplies. Therein lies the fineness and the weakness of the picture. May the film gods give Mr. von Sternberg better luck next time!

Two Gangster Films

THE gangster is still with us, not only in the news but in the movies. The two most outstanding recent films about him set out to show him in his most horrible aspect, with the professed hope that they will arouse some effective action against him. *Scarface*, or whatever it may eventually be called, says in effect: "Here is what gangsters are and what they do—what are you, the public, going to do with them?" *The Beast of the City* takes for its text an

utterance of President Hoover's urging that glorification be given to the police and the forces of law rather than to the bandits.

Neither of them, good films as they are in their ways, tells the whole story. Why gangdom rules the land, why the government of cities and of the nation itself is powerless against it, why an Al Capone can be jailed only on some income-tax technicality, is still a mystery to the movie-makers. At least it is a question to which they vouchsafe no answer. And it supplies nothing better than an exciting couple of hours to show more and more gangsters killing and terrorizing and getting away with it—for one movie gunman who is killed at the end of the picture we read daily of countless others who keep on with their traffic undisturbed.

Scarface has had a troubled pre-release career—rumors have emerged of cuts and re-takes to make it publicly acceptable. What the censors and soft-pedalers have done to it is only a matter of conjecture: from the internal evidence of the picture itself it seems likely that only incidents too hectic and too unpleasant have been removed. There is no perceptible sign that anything has been done to avoid offending those mysterious powers by which gangdom is permitted to flourish—those powers are left as mysterious as ever. Perhaps a different ending than was originally made had been given to it—the conventional sop that the wicked must inevitably perish. It may easily occur to the suspicious on seeing the conviction and hanging without any glimpse of the face of Tony, the central figure in those scenes, that the scenes were made as an afterthought when the face of the actor who played Tony was no longer available. Did the picture intend to show what so often happens in life, the criminal triumphant over law to the very end?

Whatever the difference between what it is and what it started out to be, as a film it is as good as any gangster film that has been made. It is more brutal, more cruel, more wholesale than any of its predecessors

and, by that much, nearer to the truth. It is built with more solid craftsmanship, it is better directed and better acted. Such characters as Tony and his sister and the chief, Lovo, and his girl, were created with an understanding of what human beings really are, and they are splendidly acted by Paul Muni, Ann Dvorak, Osgood Perkins and Karen Morley. The incidents through which the story unfolds are dependable enough—most of them came recognizably from events known to all newspaper men. The more important thing is that they hang together with the coherence of actual life. The only really troublesome weaknesses in the story are in the extraneous moralizing speeches, unexceptionable in their morals but quite out of place in the drama, indubitably thrown in for whatever they might be worth as a "lesson." The lesson of such films is never taught by incidental sermons but by the life that we see being lived.

The Beast of the City also has the merit of good direction and good acting, but it suffers from an overdose of purpose. It has a fine and human policeman for its hero and a fine police force, with a touch of political jobbery at work overhead to jibe with current disclosures. The overdose comes in putting the police hero in such exceptional circumstances that he is not typical: the fine hand of the fictionist has given him a weak brother—also a policeman—who succumbs to the lures of a Jean Harlow vamp, and betrays the city into the hands of the Beast, who is the leader of the gang. Then he repents and consents to a highly romantic arrangement by means of which the gangsters will open fire and create an excuse for being shot. This scheme furnishes something very exciting in the way of gun battles, but it ends in a wholesale massacre of gangsters and policemen that leaves the room strewn with nothing but dead, and the hands of the two dying brothers meeting in a last clasp as the picture fades out—to the strains of Brahms' Lullaby. So gangdom submits to bullets, not to law, and the heroic

band of police win by getting completely wiped out. A sentimental and rather impractical method of reform.

George Arliss and "The Man Who Played God"

GEORGE ARLISS as a motion picture actor, and in his relation to the art of the motion picture, has certain almost unique characteristics that are seldom spoken of. For something like a quarter of a century he has been creating a reputation that has given him a position of dignity and distinction on the American stage. His fame reached its zenith in the stage version of "Disraeli," and there it has been shining ever since with something of the unchanging fixity of a planet. His motion picture career began in the days of the silent cinema, when he made three or four pictures, two of them photographs of outstanding stage successes of his, that were only moderately popular. It was not until the addition of speech to the screen that he became a big name in the movies. As a talkie star he has brought a new audience into the picture theatres, he has brought a new kind of respectability to the films, and he has not advanced the art of the motion picture one inch: by being so popular and respected and himself so undoubtedly sincere, should he not have given more thought to the development of the creative cinema than any actor now appearing on the screen?

Mr. Arliss' individuality is peculiarly suited to the talking film. His voice can be mechanically reproduced without any loss of its special quality, and his gift for establishing a confidential relationship between himself and his audience, so that they seem to share an amused superiority to the other people in the picture, is made even more potent by the intimate closeness the camera can supply. All this has given him a singularly real personality to picture-goers, a personality for which many people feel a

real affection. In addition to this his pictures are invariably what is called wholesome, as well as entertaining, so that he has attracted an audience all his own which considers him a distinct ornament to the screen, dependable for all the virtues to be looked for in an actor of dignity and charm.

Mr. Arliss used to play very effective villains in the days before he became a star. Since the great popularity of the play "Disraeli" he has specialized in smooth craftiness concealing a kind heart, except for the picturesque and somewhat justified villainy of the Rajah in "The Green Goddess." His talkie career has stuck closely to this formula, translated in his last three pictures to the American scene and with the addition, in *Alexander Hamilton* and *The Man Who Played God*, of a slight and not altogether successful romantic interest. Essentially all his characters have been variations of his Disraeli, somewhat differing in motivation but all projected with the same histrionic methods. There is always the same formality and old-fashioned grace of manner, the same eccentricities, the same dry humor, the same sly suggestion of omniscience and reserve power, the same Englishness—in short, the same Arlissisms. All of which has its widely recognized charm, and is all very well.

What is not so well is that Mr. Arliss does not seem to think that a motion picture is anything but a stage play with a camera aimed at it, a camera that moves nearer or further away every so often but confines itself to hunks of scene covering a certain amount of dialogue. To him a talking picture is all talkie and very little movie—there probably is not one single whole sequence of genuine cinema in all his productions. Which would not matter very much if he were not so highly respected that everything he does is considered just about perfect by a great many people. His authority as a star gives him such complete domination over his productions that his directors are mere carpenters, patching scenes together according to an Arliss blue-

print: Alfred E. Green, who can do a job as full of cinematic vitality as *Union Depot*, is no better when directing an Arliss picture than John G. Adolfi, and any obedient second camera-man would do just as well. Whereas if he would submit himself to a real director who would really direct, he would be giving the motion picture an actual lift, not only by being nearer the forward ranks of producers but by giving many serious and sincere and eager-to-learn people a chance to learn, however unconsciously, that motion pictures are a distinct art in themselves, quite apart from their entertainment quality or their potency in delivering "messages."

The Man Who Played God is a very fair example of an Arliss production. It is gentlemanly and dignified and leisurely, with a great deal of talk—much of which is unnecessary and much of which is dull. It teaches a lesson of nobility, as Arliss films so often do: in *Disraeli* it was noble to make Queen Victoria Empress of India—in *The Millionaire* it was noble to work, no matter how little the economic need—in *Alexander Hamilton* it was noble to sacrifice one's reputation to one's country; here the teaching is quite definitely that one can forget one's own troubles in helping others, and that if one is rich enough one can feel omnipotent—or play God, as the title has it. It is rather quaint, as Arliss films usually turn out to be, and has a decided "period" atmosphere—this time an early-in-the-century atmosphere, one which of course still prevails in many minds in many localities.

The novel thing about the story is a clever bit of novelist's inspiration which makes a deaf man watch people in the park from his high window through strong field glasses, and learn their troubles by reading their lips when they talk. The man was a famous musician before the sudden calamity of deafness struck him, driving him to revolt against God and almost to suicide. By his beneficent spying upon people in the park he finds ways, being very rich, of helping unfortunate people for whom the lack of

money threatens not only happiness but sometimes life itself. So he comes out of his bitter solitude, and by enabling three young couples to marry feels that he is assisting God—incidentally discovering that a charming woman has been waiting years to give him love and sympathetic companionship.

The story, in spite of its novelty, has little depth, but it has a strong emotional appeal to those who are willing to believe that straightening out tangled love affairs is giving divine aid to humanity. It is far better than many stories that make what are called excellent pictures. The chief critical fault to be found with it is that it was not given to a writer and director who could have brought its cinematic technique somewhere near up to date. In this stage of motion picture development Mr. Arliss might well think it a part of his duty as an artist, as well as part of his privilege as a popular actor, to do the best possible for the medium that has helped so tremendously to increase his fame. The best possible is not his version of *The Man Who Played God*.

Freaks and Monsters

THE interest of the public in horrors is a curious thing. There was *Dracula*, which had tempted producers for years and been rejected for film purposes over and over again, from fear that the public would find it too shocking. Then suddenly it is successfully dramatized, then filmed with even more success, and starts an avalanche of horror pictures. *Frankenstein*, with its monster changed from Mary Shelley's rather pitiable creature to a combination of strong man and idiot, who aroused so much curiosity about how many people he would kill that he made the picture one of the most profitable films of the year. Then the perennial *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, with modern improvements derived from Vienna, and *Murders of the Rue Morgue*, with such horrors as Poe never dreamed of, involving the suggestion of simian rape after

the fantastic biological theory propounded by *Ingagi*, a picture that was an insult to gorillas, which scientific observation is fast discovering to be the shyest, most intelligent and discreet of all animals. Finally *Freaks*, which abandons the impossible monsters of its predecessors and has to do with the real freaks of side-shows.

All of them have virtues as entertainment, each in its own way, for those who care for that sort of entertainment. Why is it that the impossible things—the vampire of *Dracula*, the blood-and-thunder monster of *Frankenstein*, the saintly Dr. Jekyll who absurdly changes to the beast-like Hyde by drinking a drug, to say nothing of the abortive derivation from Poe—why do these creations of the lowest form of imagination, played down to the lowest limit of sensationalism, attract crowds and more crowds, when the real unfortunates of *Freaks*, a film which might be expected to inspire pity and sympathy for the mischances of nature, are greeted with shudders of genuine distaste and horror, and are turned away from? Is it that horror is exciting and enjoyable only when it is manifestly unrelated to anything real under the sun, and that pity is too strong an emotion to be endurable in the movie theatre?

(Continued from page 4)

children if there were movie houses such as have been talked of, where nothing but children's pictures are shown with gymnasiums and playgrounds adjoining. But, as one movie man said: "Kids don't want kid pictures." They were tried, but the people who made them temporary box-office successes were adults. Now the novelty has worn off, and the whole family is going to see the horror pictures. But they are already beginning to lose their charm. By the time organized protests for the benefit of the innocents have been lodged the astute movie producers will have dropped them and substituted a fresh type.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

A city-wide Better Films group which has been organized on a carefully thought-out policy and therefore is, although comparatively so new, making itself and its purposes already effective in the community is the Mt. Vernon (N. Y.) Better Films Council.

This policy is stated as a preamble to the Council's recommendations in the following words: "In view of the fact that the modern motion picture has a cultural, social and civic value not fully attained, and that often films of questionable and even harmful influence appear, and in view of the large attendance at motion pictures both by the mature and immature, we believe, as representative citizens of Mt. Vernon, and in harmony with other communities, that appropriate steps should be taken with respect to the motion pictures to promote and safeguard the best interests of the community." This is to inform the public of the meaning and reason of the Council and having definitely stated this the recommendations or plans are given as follows:

"1. That a city-wide organization of representative societies of Mt. Vernon be formed;

"2. That the purpose of this organization be to encourage the showing and attendance of worth while films;

"3. That advance information as to the character of the films, now available from responsible and disinterested sources, be utilized;

"4. That this organization undertake to develop an adequate plan and program to carry out its purposes;

"5. That the local exhibitors be invited to cooperate with this organization;

"6. That on the basis of these recommendations the various interested societies

in Mt. Vernon be invited to formally endorse this movement and to appoint two delegates to represent them in forming a permanent organization."

One of the major successes of the group was a week of an endorsed program, January 23rd-29th, at Loew's Mt. Vernon Theatre. The pictures shown from the 23rd-26th, were *Sooky*, a Mickey Mouse, a Voice of Hollywood, a Paramount Pictorial and a short, *Gilding the Goldfish*; from the 26th-29th, *Delicious*, *Beau Hunks*, a Laurel and Hardy comedy, and a newsreel. Wide publicity was given to this with resulting wide support. An attractively printed announcement was prepared for general distribution and an additional announcement, to the number of 6,000, was distributed in the schools, this latter having the name of the theatre eliminated to comply with the rules of the Board of Education.

In order to show that this group intended not simply to talk better films but to support them the opening night of this experiment was designated as "Better Films Council Night" and it was announced that all delegates to the Council were expected to attend, including officers and the executive committee, and when you realize that these delegates represent very many organizations in the city, you realize what an attendance this meant for that night and how much valuable word of mouth publicity followed. Delegates or representatives on the Council are from churches of all denominations, religious organizations, Parent-Teacher Associations, Home and School Associations, Associated Charities, Chamber of Commerce and other civic organizations, Republican and Democratic clubs, Visiting Nurses Association, Rotary Club, Westchester Women's Club, Elks, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Jr. Order United American Mechanics, Kiwanis Club, Mothers' Club, University

Club, Y. M. C. A., Y. W. C. A., Y. M. H. A., Y. W. H. A., Business and Professional Women's Club—in all organizations to the number of 72. And apparently this initial night attendance plan worked in helping to make the entire week a crowded week for Major Arthur M. Smith, the very able president of the Council, said he tried to get into the theatre early Saturday afternoon but the line waiting outside was so long it was impossible to do so and he had to go home and return later.

At a meeting of the Council following this endorsed program many letters were read from clergymen and executives of civic organizations and Parent-Teacher Associations commending it and asking for another week. And the Council naturally pleased and gratified at this success has under consideration future plans. Of these we hope to tell you later.

THE program of the Fortnightly Club of Rockville Center, N. Y., for the February 16th meeting was devoted to the subject of the motion picture. The program chairman, Mrs. Loring D. Jones came to us for suggestion in securing a speaker. Several subjects were considered which might be treated by different speakers and since the motion picture and the child was one of concern to the members the speaker invited was Mrs. Eva vB. Hansl who had so ably presented this phase at the annual conference of the National Board of Review. Mrs. Hansl is a staff associate of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection and associate editor of Parents' Magazine, and spoke from a knowledge gained in these two activities. Also on the program was Mrs. Marguerite Benson who was responsible for the inauguration of the week-end juvenile program at the Lenox Little Theatre in New York City, this past season. Much interest was shown in the program that day and Mrs. Jones reports evidence from many calls of a lasting interest.

SINCE early in the fall there has been an increasing interest in Montclair (N. J.) in the organized support of the good films through a community council. This idea had its inception in the Montclair Cultural Centre. The purposes of this organization are: "first, to provide a common platform for the presentation of varying viewpoints in the field of philosophy, science, art, religion and human betterment; second, to inculcate and exemplify a spirit of tolerance towards all dispassionate seekers after Truth and of cordial cooperation with all movements seeking to promote a spirit of Brotherhood in human relations," and the motion picture because of its importance in present day life rightly has its place in any such program. The Centre, after having given the movement impetus, detached itself as an organization, serving in the Council only as a Board member along with other club representatives.

A circular has been compiled by the Council relating its purposes and objectives, the following expressing the need of an organized community group is quoted from the summary: "Experience has shown individual effort to be nil. Until such a group is formed which can truthfully be said to represent the majority, results are bound to be negative. The object then of this Council is to bring about a solidarity of effort which heretofore as individual attempt was ineffective in achieving an objective, i.e. Better Films. No legislative action is contemplated, our program being purely an educational one. It interferes in no way with the policy which any particular group may wish individually to promote. We wish to assure for Montclair only the best in pictures through cooperation and study of the subject."

Valuable support has been given to this activity by the Montclair Times. Articles by the Chairman of the Council have been printed carrying such messages as the following: "In selecting one's theatrical fare, there is not always a scope of choice—there are limitations largely of our own making. It has

been said that a bank is no stronger than its community and so it might be said of entertainment—it is no better nor worse than public taste. Whatever the standard, its maintenance depends upon the support of the majority. While its character may be subject to change, its status generally expresses the will of the majority. This is a proven fact. However, for the benefit of those with independence and discriminating taste, the Better Films Council of Montclair has been organized. Its purpose is to sponsor the best in the cinema world, by cataloguing as to their suitability and worth the products of filmdom, leaving to the individual the freedom of choice." And editorials have been written regarding the Council. We reprint from one to show how this paper is presenting to the public the Council in its work for young people:

"During the recent weeks representatives of a number of Montclair organizations have assembled under the leadership of the Better Films Council of Montclair for the purpose of considering how the quality of motion pictures shown here may be improved. In this there is no implication that the general tone of the pictures is not high, but the aim is to guard young and impressionable minds from early contamination, from too much stimulation and from cheapness.

"Certainly this is a worthy aim and the whole task of parents would be a simple one were they able to send their young people out into a world similar to the one in which their youth had been spent. How admirably they would fit, how easy they could continue.

"But there is in the world, it happens, much that is tawdry and vile. We may close our eyes to it but we cannot escape it. And there is no greater and better training that parents can give their children than to prepare them for the world in which they must work and live. From our community, our schools, our homes should come

leaders. And leaders must have great understanding, wide knowledge and the ability to distinguish right from wrong, good from bad with utter independence.

"It is not impossible to imagine that a bright and impressionable boy might, under the guidance of his dad who had been through the mill, learn more good from a picture that was absolutely bad than he would gain from many long ethical preachments on conduct in theory. Not so long ago Clarence Darrow told an audience in a nearby community that the only hope for salvation from the ills that oppress us lies in enlightenment. Reveal the good and the bad as such to young people and they will despise wrong things.

"We do not believe that those who would regulate films here are aiming at censorship. We believe that they are so intelligent that the evils of such an objective are all too apparent. We agree that there are pictures which serve no useful purpose from the standpoint of adult or child alike, and that these properly may be questioned. In fact, motion picture producers recognize this today and are taking steps to eliminate such films. But there is another thought entirely apart which seems worthy of more than passing consideration. When motion picture films come to Montclair we have them on our own ground. Parents can see them with their children. It is possible to discuss plots, structure, good points and bad afterward. Youthful judgment can be developed, standards built, artistic values emphasized and a foundation of clear understanding laid that will continue through life an imperishable, impregnable asset."

Starting March the first the Times announced that it would publish on the theatre page brief releases from the National Board of Review evaluating motion picture presentations about to be shown at all the local theatres as regards their dramatic and entertainment value and classifying them as to their suitability for adult, family and juvenile audiences.

THE first junior matinee presented under the auspices of the Parent-Teacher Association of Old Greenwich, Conn., was a decided success. The auditorium of the June Binney Memorial Parish House was filled to its capacity for the performance on the afternoon of January the 8th. The program selected under the direction of the Committee for Better Films for Children was a particularly fine one including a travelogue of the Alps, *A Bit of High Life*, a comedy and the jungle picture *Simba* as the feature. The school orchestra played before the show started. The sale of tickets evidenced the community's desire for picture programs of this type. There were many pupils of the Greenwich schools in the afternoon audience, who had been dismissed from school in order that an opportunity might be afforded to view this educational feature picture. Mrs. Theodore E. Veltfort served as chairman of the committee in charge and was assisted by members of her committee who acted as chaperones for the afternoon. The Greenwich Y. M. C. A. donated motion picture machines and other equipment and operator services. The program was repeated at 8 o'clock in the evening for adults. The audience which filled the auditorium in the evening were generous in their praise of the project as supplying a great community need. The proceeds of the evening performance were donated to the fund for community relief in Old Greenwich.

So successful was this program that a second one was arranged under the able and enthusiastic leadership of Mrs. Veltfort for Saturday, February the 13th. The feature shown was *The Vanishing American* and there was in addition as before a travelogue and a comedy. A very especial event of the day was an Indian dance, "Thunderbird," by a member of the faculty of the King School in Stamford, Conn., who had studied at the Denishawn School of Dancing in New York City.

The decided interest in this the second matinee resulted in plans being made for

them to be held regularly each month hereafter with two Saturday performances, one at 2 and one at 4 o'clock. The second one, Mrs. Veltfort says, is to be the fathers' matinee for by that hour they are home from their duties and can have the pleasure of accompanying the youngsters to the show and enjoying it with them.

MOTHERS of the pupils of the three upper grades of the Public Schools of Bogota, New Jersey, were invited last month by the chairman of the motion picture committee of the Hawthorne School P.T. A., to an informal get-together in the school building. All of the teachers were also invited to attend. The topic considered was "The Movies and the Adolescent Child." The meeting gave the mothers an opportunity to discuss problems confronting parents today regarding motion pictures.

The editor of this department was asked to lead the round table and the many stimulating and thought-provoking questions made this a pleasure. Some of the questions are given below as perhaps contributing valuable suggestions to other groups who may wish to conduct such a discussion period in their motion picture study work. Do children up to 12 understand the sex phase of a picture, or do they simply class it as a picture with love in it and pass over that part looking for the bigger excitement of action, war, airplanes, etc.? How is the advertising of motion pictures handled—is there any way that mothers who wish to discriminate can decide from the advertisement of the coming attraction whether or not it is a desirable picture for their child to see? Are the producers making as many gangster and fighting films as in the past—in your opinion do these types of pictures increase crime among the youth of the country? Does the present method of booking attractions for local theatres leave any opportunity for the manager to select pictures suitable to his audiences? What effect if any, does a "sexy" picture have on a 15-year-old girl? Has the motion picture in-

dustry considered that motion pictures like books should differ for adults and children up to say 15 or 16 years of age, and provide them for the children during the daylight hours and for the adults in the evening? Why are children allowed to choose the films they see, or go every other night regardless of what film is being shown? Do you think that murder and gangster films may be more harmful than those involving sex. It seems to me that the former appeals to the adventuresome nature of all while the latter would only be understood by a few? What is your opinion of the exciting serial pictures which seem to be so popular with juvenile audiences?

The showing of two short films preceded the discussion—they were *How Eyes Tell Lies*, an Ufa scientific reel and *Falschood*, the story of an adolescent boy secured from the Y. M. C. A. Motion Picture Bureau.

THE selection of films for children to see having come up as one of the problems of the Parent-Teachers' Council of the city of Schenectady, New York, the Council decided to try the experiment of advertising recommendations of films to be shown in the city. A committee of the Council is in charge of the work. One of the principal aims of the plan is to interest and help parents in advising attendance at pictures instead of allowing the children to go to the theatre with no idea of what the bill is to be. All the exhibitors have been interviewed and are interested in the project.

Recommendations will be based upon the National Board of Review, the Parents' Magazine and other dependable sources. They will be divided into two classes, one for children and the other for young persons from 12 to 18 years. Members of the Parent-Teachers' Council in handling the work say that if they recommend a certain picture and there is a second feature which is not suitable for children it will be the parents' fault and not theirs if the children stay through the unsuitable film. Mrs. W. C. White, chairman of this committee, has

written to us of this activity. She says the work was started in time to advise parents regarding the Christmas holidays with the idea that if it were successful the Council would want it continued as a permanent service to interested parents and this has been done.

A January visitor to our office was Mrs. Frank L. Christian of Elmira, New York. Mrs. Christian has been interested in motion pictures for the Elmira Reformatory and now she has extended this interest to a wider field in the successful organization of a Motion Picture Community Council. At the organization meeting early in February Mrs. Christian was chosen president. Representatives from more than forty local organizations attended this meeting and adopted the following slogan for the Council—"Larger Audiences for Better Films." It has the full cooperation of Elmira theatre managers, and will work with the managers in an effort to bring the better shows to this city. A committee will obtain a list of the pictures which the local theatres are contemplating showing, working toward the support of the wholesome family films.

THE Better Films Committee of White Plains (N. Y.) has decided to discontinue the Saturday morning matinees for young people and instead will endorse the worth while pictures as they come to the local theatres. The endorsement will appear with the advertisement of the picture. Some will be endorsed for the whole family, others for children and some for adults only. The managers have expressed appreciation of this work on the part of the Committee and are ready to cooperate in every way possible. Mrs. George Packard is chairman of this Committee. She has worked in the past with the Junior Entertainment and Film Guild of Albany (N. Y.), in which city she lived, and has now transferred her interest to like work in White Plains.

MRS. J. C. BUCKLAND, chairman of the Better Films Department of the Wisconsin Federation of Women's Clubs addressed the Better Films Council of the County Federation of Women's Clubs at the Y. W. C. A. in Milwaukee recently. Her subject was "Notes from the National Board Conference." We were pleased to have Mrs. Buckland with her stimulating interest in attendance at the Conference and we are likewise pleased that she has carried word of the meeting to interested groups in her western city.

AN interest in motion pictures is marking the school activities of the communities of the Oranges and Maplewood in New Jersey. The Better Films Committee of the Women's Division of the Chamber of Commerce and Civics of Maplewood and the Oranges supplies a weekly guide to the worth while pictures and it is reported that the public schools are taking an active interest in the effort of the Committee. In East Orange the school superintendent has caused the reports of the committee on pictures to be placed on the bulletin boards. Pictures are graded as excellent, good and fair by the committee. Pictures not recommended by the committee are ignored altogether. The committee hopes in this way to arouse interest in better films and thereby build up a patronage in the theatres that will make the best pictures more profitable.

The reaction in the East Orange schools has been remarkable according to reports received from the school system. Much interest has been shown in the ratings on pictures by the children and efforts are being made to extend this service to other schools.

In West Orange lists of approved films are read at Parent-Teacher meetings while further points of contact are being made in the schools of Orange and the South Orange-Maplewood district. Lists of approved films are also sent to the libraries where they are displayed on bulletin boards. Publicity is being secured in other ways also

for the better films in cooperation with theatre managers who supply their programs in advance for checking purposes.

The West Orange High School held a recent debate on the subject, "Resolved, that censorship of motion pictures in the United States be controlled by the Federal Government." The seniors upheld the negative and the post-graduates the affirmative with the seniors being awarded the decision. Apparently the young people have better arguments against than for censorship; they too believe in selection.

QUICK action has followed the interest in better films and children's matinees in Tampa, Florida, of which Mrs. N. W. Hensley, field member of the National Board of Review, wrote to us on January 28; she said, "We have the most splendid cooperation from our theatre men and from the various organizations of Tampa and believe we have the starting of a splendid organization." This theatre interest was proven at one of their meetings when the district manager of the Sparks Theatres, an important chain in Florida, offered the cooperation of his organization and spoke on pictures available and other related matters. The first junior matinee program was arranged for February 20th, the forerunner of a regular weekly series in which the schools and churches will work with the better films group and the theatres to insure their success.

THE Better Films Committee of Westwood, N. J., reorganized, it is reported, at a business meeting held recently. Methods explained at the National Board of Review Conference which several members attended were discussed with a view to incorporating them in the local group's program. The family night program which the committee is trying to have shown regularly on Friday will be introduced at the Westwood Theatre Saturday night, vaudeville having been booked for the preceding night.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

EDITOR

JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIOUS INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

AFTER TOMORROW—From the stage play by Golden and Stange, directed by Frank Borzage, with a cast including Charles Farrell, Marion Nixon and Minna Gombell. Fox, 8 reels. Rather long story but human and credible—in the class of *Street Scene* and *Bad Girl*—about a couple whose marriage has to be continually postponed on account of their families' needs. Several excellent characterizations and excellent direction. *Mature audience.*

AIR EAGLES—Screen story by Hampton del Ruth, directed by Phil Whitman, with a cast including Lloyd Hughes, Shirley Grey and Norman Kerry. Monogram, 7 reels. Fair romantic drama of two stunt flyers with a circus, well acted and with some good flying. *Family audience.*

***ARSENE LUPIN**—From the play by Maurice le Blanc and Francis de Croisset, directed by Jack Conway, with a cast headed by John and Lionel Barrymore. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. The lively and entertaining chase after a clever thief. The Barrymore brothers have a great time keeping up the mystery of Lupin—John at his best in a gay and very amusing part. It is an unusually neat combination of comedy and melodrama. *Mature audience.*

AVALANCHE—German production directed by Dr. Arnold Fanck. First Division, 7 reels. An odd combination of breath-taking Alpine scenery—extremely beautiful—thrilling mountain climbing, a storm on Mount Blanc and a rather insignificant story. *Family audience.*

***THE BEAST OF THE CITY**—From the novel by W. R. Burnett, directed by Charles Brabin, with a cast headed by Walter Huston. Metro-

Goldwyn-Mayer, 10 reels. An antidote to gangster films, showing the heroism of the police, not too romantically or sentimentally. A vigorous and often exciting picture, with racy dialogue, good acting and excellent direction. *Mature audience.*

BEHIND THE MASK—Screen story by Jo Sverling, directed by John Francis Dillon, with a cast including Jack Holt and Constance Cummings. Columbia, 7 reels. Who is the mysterious Mr. X, the man behind the mask? Jack Holt makes a break from prison, joins the forces of a notorious drug ring to discover the unknown leader. *Mature audience.*

BUSINESS AND PLEASURE—From the novel "The Plutocrat" by Booth Tarkington, directed by David Butler, with a cast headed by Will Rogers. Fox, 8 reels. A very free but fairly amusing adaptation of the popular novel relating the adventures of an American razor blade manufacturer among sheiks and vampires in Arabia. *Family audience.*

FIREMAN SAVE MY CHILD—Screen story by Enright, Lord and Caesar, directed by Lloyd Bacon, with a cast headed by Joe E. Brown. First National, 6 reels. Typical Joe E. Brown character—conceited but extraordinary baseball player whose real ambition is to be a fireman. An exciting baseball game at the end. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

FREAKS—From the story "Spurs" by Tod Robbins, directed by Tod Browning, with a cast including Olga Baclanova, Wallace Ford and Leila Hyams. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 7 reels. Story of circus-freak life, the thesis being that a wrong to one freak is resented and avenged by all. Very effectively done, with more genuine horror than is to be found in the recent "monster" pictures. Not for people with tender sensibilities. *Mature audience.*

FRENCH LEAVE—From the stage play by Reginald Berkeley, directed by Jack Raymond, with an English cast. Talking Picture Epoch, 6 reels. An English farce—comedy of an officer's wife visiting her husband in his billet in France. Photography and sound not first-rate but it is an interesting film. *Mature audience.*

THE GREEKS HAD A WORD FOR THEM—*From the stage play "The Greeks Had a Word for It" by Zoe Akins, directed by Lowell Sherman, with a cast headed by Ina Claire, Joan Blondell and Madge Evans. United Artists, 7 reels. Clever dialogue and highly amusing performances mark this picture of three happy-go-lucky girls who live by their wits. Mature audience.*

HOTEL CONTINENTAL—*Screen story by F. Hugh Herbert and Paul Perez, directed by Christy Cabanne, with a cast including Peggy Shannon and Theodore von Eltz. Tiffany, 7 reels. Drama built around the events which occurred in the Hotel Continental on the eve of its closing after serving the public many years. Mature audience.*

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES—*From the novel by A. Conan Doyle, dialogue by Edgar Wallace, directed by V. Gareth Gundry, with an English cast. First Division, 7 reels. A picturization of Doyle's splendid Sherlock Holmes thriller that does not get all the possible thrills out of it but is worth the attention of Sherlock Holmes' fans. Mature audience.*

THE IMPATIENT MAIDEN—*From the novel "The Impatient Virgin" by Donald Henderson Clarke, directed by James Whale, with a cast including Mae Clarke and Lew Ayres. Universal, 9 reels. The romance of a young interne and a youthful stenographer who has become cynical about marriage from her work in a divorce lawyer's office. Mature audience.*

LADY WITH A PAST—*From the novel by Harriet Henry, directed by Edward G. Griffith, with a cast headed by Constance Bennett. RKO-Pathé, 9 reels. Neat and clever, with Constance Bennett a good girl learning how to attract men instead of a repentant sinner as she has so often portrayed recently. Amusing and fairly lively with a definite glitter of satire that will not annoy people who do not like satire. Mature audience.*

THE LOCAL BAD MAN—*From the story by Peter B. Kyne, directed by Otto Brower, with a cast headed by Hoot Gibson. Hollywood, 7 reels. A good Western, not very rapid in movement but true to cowboy life, with a good deal of pleasant humor. Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE LOST SQUADRON—*Screen story by Dick Grace, directed by George Archambaud, with a cast headed by Richard Dix. RKO-Radio, 9 reels. Four aviators, cut loose from former ties after the war, become stunt fliers for a motion picture company with resultant melodrama, sacrifice and thrills. The production is good and the cast also including Hugh Herbert, Eric von Stroheim and Mary Astor, excellent. Mature audience.*

***THE MAN WHO PLAYED GOD**—*From the stage play by Jules Goodman founded on a short story by Gouveneur Morris, directed by John Adolphi, with a cast headed by George*

Arliss. Warner, 8 reels. A musician, rich and world famous, becomes suddenly and completely deaf—and curses God. When he learns lip-reading he watches people in the park from his apartment through strong field glasses—reads their lips, learns their troubles and then sets them right. Strong in sentiment and uplift. Suitable for church showings. Family audience.

THE MARK OF THE SPUR—*Screen story by Stephen G. Hust, directed by J. P. McGowan, with a cast headed by Bob Custer. Big Four, 6 reels. Western with no great originality but a good hold on the interest of those who like Westerns. Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE—*From the story by Edgar Allen Poe, directed by Robert Florey, with a cast headed by Bela Lugosi. Universal, 6 reels. Poe's horror story of the scientist, played by the star of Dracula, who tries to unite the blood of an ape with that of a young girl. In his attempts he murders several girls and finally the ape takes justice in his own hands. The story holds one's interest throughout although the acting is not especially outstanding and the story does not take advantage of the full amount of horror that one would expect from Poe's work. Mature audience.*

***ONE HOUR WITH YOU**—*From the play by Lothar Schmidt, directed by Ernst Lubitsch, with a cast headed by Maurice Chevalier. Paramount, 9 reels. Highly amusing and pleasing musical French farce for the sophisticated audience. The music is catchy and the acting excellent. Mature audience.*

POLICE COURT—*Screen story by Stuart Anthony, directed by Louis King, with a cast including Henry B. Walthall, Leon Janney and Aileen Pringle. Monogram, 6 reels. Story of a famous actor who has gone to ruin through drink and his small son who tries to bring him back. Though obviously an attempt to try to do the "Champ" sort of thing it is effective and touching. Mature audience.*

POLLY OF THE CIRCUS—*From the novel by Margaret Mayo, directed by Alfred Santell, with a cast headed by Marion Davies and Clark Gable. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels. The love story of a minister and a trapeze performer in which virtue and self-sacrifice finally overcome prejudice. Clean and moral with some splendid trapeze performing. Family audience.*

***SHANGHAI EXPRESS**—*From the story by Harry Harvey, directed by Josef von Sternberg, with a cast headed by Marlene Dietrich and Clive Brook. Paramount, 9 reels. An episode in the lives of the passengers on the express from Peking to Shanghai when the revolutionists hold up the train. Shanghai Lily, who has met her former fiancé, an English army captain, on the train, is ready to sacrifice everything to save him. The direction is excellent and the acting of Marlene Dietrich exceptional. Mature audience.*

SHE WANTED A MILLIONAIRE—Screen story by Sonya Levien, directed by John Blystone, with a cast headed by Joan Bennett. Fox, 7 reels. A Missouri girl who became Miss America at the Atlantic City Bathing Beauty Pageant, married a millionaire and ran into melodrama. Very well done with plenty of laughs to relieve its excitement. Good program picture. *Mature audience.*

SKY DEVILS—Screen story by Joseph March and Edward Sutherland, directed by Edward Sutherland, with a cast including Spencer Tracy, William Boyd and George Cooper. United Artists, 8 reels. Amusing burlesque on aviation during the World War. Three soldiers have hilarious times getting in and out of trouble, particularly in the air. The fine acting and the unexpected twists in the plot make this picture very entertaining. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SOUTH OF THE RIO GRANDE—Screen story by Harold Shumate, directed by Lambert Hillyer, with a cast headed by Buck Jones. Columbia, 6 reels. A pretty good adventure picture in which the hero is the commandant of the Mexican Rurales—the police force—in the old days. *Family audience.*

STEADY COMPANY—Screen story by Edward Luddy, directed by Edward Ludwig, with a cast including Norman Foster and June Clyde. Universal, 7 reels. The story of a truck driver who is deserted by his girl when she learns he has aspirations to become a prize-fighter. However, when he loses a fight she returns and spurs him on. *Family audience.*

STRANGERS IN LOVE—From the novel "The Shorn Lamb" by William Locke, directed by Lothar Mendes, with a cast including Fredric March, Kay Francis and Stuart Erwin. Paramount, 7 reels. The story of twin brothers in which the prodigal assumes the place of the other upon his death. Stuart Erwin provides some good comedy and Fredric March gives his usual finished performance in the dual role of the brothers. *Family audience.*

THE TEXAS CYCLONE—Screen story by William McDonald, directed by Ross Lederman, with a cast headed by Tim McCoy. Columbia, 6 reels. A mystery man from Texas appears in a town where he bears a miraculous resemblance to someone who has disappeared. He takes up a fight against train robbers—making an unusually good Western with plenty of action and good acting. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

TEXAS GUN FIGHTER—Screen story by Ben Cohen, directed by Phil Rosen, with a cast headed by Ken Maynard. Tiffany, 6 reels. Another Western in which the wonder horse, Tarzan, runs away with the picture. A young out-law decides on the straight and narrow and is appointed sheriff to bring law and order to a silver mining town. Excellent horsemanship and scenery. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

***TRAPPED IN A SUBMARINE**—Screen story by Walter Mycroft, directed by Walter Summers, with an English cast. British International, 5 reels. Realistic and thrilling picture, made with the assistance of the British Admiralty, demonstrating the Davis Escape Apparatus. Pathos is laid on a bit thick at times, and the British talk is occasionally hard to follow, but the technical parts are absorbing and the heroism genuinely moving. *Mature audience.*

WAYWARD—From the novel "Wild Beauty" by Mateel H. Farnham, directed by Edward Sloman, with a cast headed by Nancy Carroll and Richard Arlen. Paramount, 8 reels. Story of a chorus girl who marries a socially prominent young man and goes to live with his puritanical mother, who can not understand the marriage. Although drastic means are employed to separate them love conquers all. *Mature audience.*

WILD WOMEN OF BORNEO—First Division, 5 reels. A mild travelogue that visits Mexico, Singapore and Borneo, showing many unusual sights and some unusual ones. *Family audience.*

SHORT SUBJECTS

ALL AROUND THE TOWN (Hodge Podge Series)—Educational, 1 reel. An interesting picture showing scenes of New York City. *Family audience.*

BABBLING BOOKS—Paramount, 1 reel. Comedy skit in a book store. *Family audience.*

BATTLING BOSKO (Looney Tune)—Vitaphone, 1 reel. Amusing cartoon. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BELIEVE IT OR NOT NOS. 5-6—Vitaphone, 1 reel each. Ripley as usual. *Family audience.*

BIG-HEARTED BOSKO (Looney Tune)—Vitaphone, 1 reel. Bosko in still another amusing adventure. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

CHALK UP—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1 reel. Willie Hoppe making extraordinary pool and billiard shots with explanatory and often amusing comments by Pete Smith. *Family audience.*

CURIOSITIES NO. 231—Columbia, 1 reel. The usual thing of its kind containing among other curious items a modern Robinson Crusoe in Florida; an ancient water pump in Palestine; and performing parrots. *Family audience.*

DESERT REGATTA—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1 reel. Motorboat racing on a salt lake in the desert of Southern California—amusing. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

*THE DUCK HUNT (Mickey Mouse Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Brilliantly funny cartoon in which Mickey goes duck hunting. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

FANCY CURVES (Playing Ball with Babe Ruth Series)—*Universal*, 1 reel. Babe Ruth shows the girls how to play baseball. In a game with the men the girls are losing until Babe, dressed as a girl, goes to bat and saves the day for them. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

FLYING LEATHER (Spotlight Series)—*RKO-Pathe*, 1 reel. Depicting collegiate boxing and ending with some kids sparring. *Family audience.*

FREE EATS—*Our Gang, Metro-Goldwyn Mayer*, 2 reels. Hal Roach's Rascals—including a fascinating new infant—help catch some midget crooks. Very musing. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE GALL OF THE NORTH—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Eddie Buzzell tells the grown-ups another bed-time story burlesquing melodramas of the frozen north, with his typical nonsense and puns. *Family audience.*

*THE GROCERY BOY (Mickey Mouse Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Mickey as a grocery boy—with his hilarious dog playing a prominent part. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

HOLLYWOOD GOES KRAZY (Krazy Kat Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. There are some amusing caricatures of the stars in this cartoon in which Krazy Kat gets into the Hollywood studios. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

HOT DOG—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. An amusing Penrod comedy. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

*THE LAND OF THE SHALIMAR—*Capital*, 2 reels. Lovely picture of India's beautiful river, ending with the Taj Mahal. *Family audience.*

MINDING THE BABY (Scrappy Cartoon)—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Scrappy has to mind the baby but he finds it too much for him. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE MOVIE ALBUM—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Interesting and entertaining excerpts from old movies with Lionel Barrymore, Wallace Reid, Lillian Gish, the Sidney Drews, Norma Shearer, et cetera. *Family audience.*

*THE MUSIC BOX—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 3 reels. One of the funniest of the Laurel and Hardy comedies. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE MYSTERY OF MARRIAGE—*British International*, 2 reels. Courtship and marriage paralleled in the lives of human beings, animals and plants. Beautifully photographed and interestingly presented, with occasional unobtrusive instructional value. *Family audience.*

THE NICKEL NURSER—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 reels. Charley Chase takes a job to reduce the expenses of three spendthrift girls—amusing. *Family audience.*

OLD SONGS FOR NEW—*Paramount*, 1 reel. George Stoll and his band playing the old songs. Done in color. *Family audience.*

OVER THE FENCE (Playing Ball with Babe Ruth Series)—*Universal*, 1 reel. A team of youthful baseball enthusiasts are coached by the Babe. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PAGAN MOON (Looney Tune)—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Amusing comedy cartoon. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PATHE REVIEW Nos. 7-8—*RKO-Pathe*, 1 reel each. Interesting sights including scenes in Edinburgh; life in Tahiti; a parrot that talks amusingly, et cetera. *Family audience.*

PLAY BALL (Terry-Toon)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Fantastic baseball game played by animals. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

REMEMBER WHEN—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Interesting shots that have become historic from old newsreels with uninteresting wise-crack comments. *Family audience.*

RUNNING WITH CHARLES PADDOCK (All-American Sportreel)—*Universal*, 1 reel. Showing the Olympic champion's running technique with the use of slow motion. *Family audience.*

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 6—*Columbia*, 1 reel. Many stars shown at the races at Agua Caliente. Slim Summerville shoveling snow; stars of other years. *Family audience.*

SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 8—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Interesting events of several decades ago. *Family audience.*

SINGING WATERS—*Talking Picture Epics*, 1 reel. A tour through the country of the Oregon and Columbia Rivers with magnificent scenery and a pleasant musical accompaniment. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SWIM OR SINK (Talkcartoon)—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Comedy cartoon with songs starring Betty Boop. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

TED HUSING'S SPORTSLANTS NOS. 5-6—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel each. Ted Husing interestingly shows us backgammon, jiu-jitsu, wrestling, bowling, boxing and billiards. *Family audience.*

TORCHY'S TWO TOOTS—*Educational*, 2 reels. Good comedy in which Torchy comes through by carrying important papers to his boss by 'plane. *Family audience.*

*THE TRAGEDY OF MT. EVEREST—*Capital*, 3 reels. Captain John Noel's vivid account of the attempt to scale Mt. Everest, an historic expedition to conquer the world's highest mountain. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL
of the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures
offers through its
AFFILIATED BETTER FILMS COMMITTEES
An Opportunity to Promote
Better Motion Picture Programs in Your Home Theatre

The Better Films Committee or Motion Picture Study Club plan has been found by many communities to be an adaptable and effective method of accomplishing telling organized local work for better pictures.

The purposes of the Better Films Committees affiliated with the Better Films National Council are:

To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

The Better Films National Council as an aid in carrying out these purposes furnishes an information service through its various publications.

Please use the coupon below and write for the publications you yourself would like or would like to have sent to interested friends.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Greta Garbo and John Barrymore in "Grand Hotel"

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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The Newsreel's Coming of Age

A GREAT many people who regard the newsreels as the most entertaining—not to say the most instructive—films that the motion picture theatres have to offer lament the brevity of these reels and the all-too-fleeting glimpse they give of scenes and events that, because of the interest of the occurrences themselves or the visual appeal, might well be allowed much longer footage. The newsreels are too skimpy. Or they are too flimsy. For many also regret that too often the material that composes the newsreel is trivial and banal, that instead of dwelling more on vital dramatic happenings of our world today, the newsreel is prone to present, after the custom of the Sunday illustrated supplements and the tabloids, what is merely sensational, puerile and fantastic—scraps of the latest gun-shooting, bathing beauties showing a push-ball on the beach, Floyd Gibbons broadcasting humanitarianism from the ruins of Chapei, a senator rampant or couchant, Aimee extemporizing sweetness and light templeward in the West from a pier-head in the North River, a city official planting a tree to commemorate a civic virtue. Now a composite film of a goodly length comes along to prove that the newsreel camera, after the manner of the true reporter, has caught in its daily grind that gathers trash, flotsam and jetsam, the great story of our times as well.

As assembled, these pictures which compose *Cry of the World* accost with a burning question—"What has happened to the societies of this globe, whither are they going, and to what solution of their troubles?" Panoratically, powerfully, arrestingly, and to the thoughtful on-looker's confusion, this film illuminates the spectacle of present world unbalanced gyration and unrest: the talk of politicians, statesmen and fixers, our own bewilderment in the face of Prohibition, the squabbles of governments and invaded peoples, the universal stir for Peace guarantees—the League of Nations council chamber with all the countries' women's representatives presenting tons of signatures recording the feminine vote against oppression and war, Japan dragging up her guns, her planes, and bombing Chapei from earth and air, Mr. Ramsaye MacDonald in London solemnly at elocution concerning India's freedom (Gandi, the Indian delegates and their hosts seated around him) in India, the sequel of Gandi being arrested, his unarmed followers beaten up by the native police under British officers; the whole, a back-and-forth network of visual moving pattern with the sound and fury of speech opposite the sound and fury of action. Through the telescope of this we can look, not too comfortably, to where this earthy ball of ours "spins like a fretful midge."

Cry of the World is grand social com-

ment, and therefore comment upon us as humans. It proves that the motion picture, when allowed to be, is the most potent and biting of expressive mediums. No such picture of world ironies, absurdities, and evils and efforts to correct them, and the platitudes, errors and hypocrisies arising from the cross-purposes such efforts involve, could be afforded by press, pulpit and stage combined. For here we see the camera going places and recording precisely happenings—not what is reported by words but what is seen on the spot.

Cry of the World is put forward as a Peace film. It is much more than that, for it shows that the world has many cries. It is much more, possibly, than its producers, skillful as they have been in piecing the film together and connecting it with altogether admirable titles (it is a triumph of editing), foresaw it would or intended it should be. But as it is presented, it surely projects facts more frankly and fearlessly than the motion picture is accustomed or permitted to do, with deeper implications and longer connotations than the films can be accused of having usually, seeing that the newsreel, left to its length, is its own scenarist and director. This film says clearly, sometimes sadly, that, before reason is the order, before peace can be had, and wars and riddles cease, human beings must become, not less wicked or greedy or apart, but more sensible, truthful and stable emotionally—in a word something somewhat different from what most members of the human race are at present. For all of this *Cry of the World* is the newsreel *par excellence*. And how far ahead the motion picture would get as a medium of service if many more pictures like it were to be produced.—W. A. B.



One Visual Instruction Organization

THE 1932 Annual Conference of the National Board having been devoted to the subject "Special Functions of the Motion Picture in Recreation and Education," with one session given over entirely to the discussion of films in education, there was evinced very special interest in the question of visual instruction by the members of the National Board in New York City and without gathered at the conference. This interest of the public, particularly that part of the public organized into Better Films Councils, will undoubtedly have weight in different communities in introducing and supporting the use of motion pictures in the schools.

After noting this interest on the part of the laymen, as it were, it was most stimulating to learn what was being done within the field as expressed at the meeting of the National Academy of Visual Instruction and the Department of Visual Instruction of the National Education Association held in Washington.

Authoritative speakers presented reports from their experience in helpful discussion sessions and notable accomplishment marked the business session. In a report of the meeting the secretary, Mr. Ellsworth C. Dent, says "the most important outcome of the business session was the final approval of the plan for merging the National Academy of Visual Instruction with the Department of Visual Instruction of the National Education Association. The two organizations have been working parallel to each other since 1923 and the very existence of the two smaller organizations has caused general confusion among those who might have been interested in joining one or the other. It has been found that many maintained membership in both organizations and that the majority of these have been wondering why the two organizations

(Continued on page 12)

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional* and *Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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The Battle of Gallipoli

Adapted by Anthony Asquith from Ernest Raymond's novel "Tell England," directed by Anthony Asquith and Geoffrey Barkas, photographed by Jack Parker, Stanley Rodwell and James Rogers, produced by British Instructional Films, Ltd., distributed by Powers Pictures, Inc.

The Cast

Doe.....Carl Harbord.
Ray.....Tony Bruce
Mrs. Doe.....Fay Compton

ON August 25th, 1915, the first army of the British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force landed at four beaches on the tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula. One of the most heroic, sanguinary actions, ancient or modern, took place as a result. The men were placed in barges and towed by launches to within rowing distance of the shore. The barges were rowed the rest of the way by sailors of the Fleet. Exposed, without protection to the violent fire, rifle and machine-gun, of the entrenched Turks, the occupants of these barges were slaughtered in droves, in the boats, in the water, and getting on shore. At the beach, designated as V in the plans for battle, under the shadow of the rocks of Sedd-el-Bahr, the most violent slaughter took place. There the British had grounded the troop ship, River Clyde, fitted with portcullises for lowering, over which the attacking companies were to rush in making their landing. When

these fittings were let down, and the men started forth, they were destroyed in heaps by the murderous Turkish machine-guns. But the beach was held and secured to the British. It is this attack that furnishes the stuff for the opening of *The Battle of Gallipoli*, a British film made under the supervision of Army and Navy experts by the British Instructional Films, Ltd., and shown abroad under the title *Tell England*. And what stuff it is! And what a picture!

No better way to express the effect of these sequences of the film than to quote from the "Gallipoli Diary" of the Commanding-General, Sir Ian Hamilton: ". . . we could see boatloads making for land; swarms trying to straighten themselves out along the shore; groups digging and hacking down the brushwood . . . God, one would think, cannot see them all or He would put a stop to this sort of panorama altogether. And yet, it would be pity if He missed it; for these fellows have been worth the making."

When the ships (in the film) begin to fire, we can look with this Commander's eyes as he watches from his station in the dreadnought *Queen Elizabeth*: "Every gun spouted flame and a roar went up fit to shiver the stars of Heaven . . . still, in some chance second interval, we could hear the hive-like b'rr rr rr rr r r r of the small arms playing on the shore; still see, through some

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Exceptional
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Honorable Mention

Der Andere
Arrowsmith
Broken Lullaby
Elisabeth von
Oesterreich
Golden Mountains
Grand Hotel
Der Raub der
Mona Lisa
Zwei Menschen

break in the acrid smoke, the profile of the castle and the houses; nay, of the very earth itself and the rocky cliff; see them all, change, break, dissolve into dust, crumble as if by enchantment into strange new outlines, under the enormous explosions of our . . . shells. . . . Buildings gutted, walls and trenches turned inside out and upside down; friend and foe surely must be wiped out together under such a fire; at least they are stupified—must cease taking a hand with their puny rifles and machine-guns? Not so. Amidst falling ruins; under smoke clouds of yellow, black, green and white; the beach, the cliffs and the ramparts . . . began . . . to sparkle all over with hundreds of tiny flecks of rifle fire." So we see it, feel it. So perfectly depicted the action with its sound effects. No such wonderful picture of war, in these sequences of approach, attack, bombardment and the sheer explosive excitement in which flesh is torn, blood gushes, and bone crumbles with the crumbling earth, has been vouchsafed us by the cinema before. Because of its authenticity, its care to have things right in the light of what actually happened, we feel that this was so, that lives were blackened out like this, that history is at the back of it, that it all lingered in the eye of this lens, was caught by this film. This was Sedd-el-Bahr.

And because this was Sedd-el-Bahr and the word had been rumored in England what its hell had been like and the hell of the whole Peninsula struggle had become, and what the chance of death was for men to go there, we can well understand the dread with which the families of Doe and Ray saw them ordered for duty with the new army going out to Gallipoli.

Doe and Ray, when we first meet them before the war begins, are young English school boys whose homes are neighborly. These first glimpses are idyllic, laid in the suburban English country-side, eloquent of the fresh companionship of youth, the joys of swimming, punting and the traditional afternoon tea with Doe's comradely young mother—a sequence tender and blithe and

photographically very lovely with water-stretches and gently gliding swans, fresh banks, fields, hedges and half-hidden houses standing amid their gardens. Then Doe and Ray in school, the swimming matches, the partisanship and excitement of healthy English school sports. Then the war, Doe's and Ray's enlistment in the officers' corps, the order and sailing for Gallipoli, the believably human officers' celebration on the eve of the ship's arrival—the last a notable sequence.

The night of August 6th, 1915, and throughout the next day, the landing of the new army at Sulva Bay, to occupy the heights commanding the Narrows and out-flank the Turks, took place, and it is with this landing that the experiences of Doe and Ray on the Peninsula begin, culminating with the death of Doe.

It is an intimate story, this of the two young friends, somewhat like that of the young officers in *Journey's End*, but set in a much more vivid way against the background of the trenches, of attacks, of the gun that cannot be destroyed and keeps firing into the trench area in which they have their dugout. In his single-handed heroic destruction of this gun, Doe is mortally wounded. The last scene of the film is after the final British evacuation, where in the stillness and desolation, a German officer reads the inscription on Doe's rough grave—a translation the boy has made of the epitaph on the monument at Thermopylae, "Tell Sparta that we lie here obedient to their commands"—which is to say, Tell England.

The virtues of this film are many. It is a great film—humanly, historically, pictorially. It makes us feel war—the shining bravery of men in the fear, and horror, and death. It is cinematic, done with a beautiful grasp of suggestion prepared for and pointed at the right moments with complete literalness. The sequences of the boats, filled with the armies, approaching the shore, the glint of oars in the sunlight when the towing pinnaces cast the barges free, and the oarsmen start to row, the suspense shots

of the Turkish riflemen and machine-gunners waiting to fire into the human targets, the shells exploding along the heights as the ships fire, the hard-pressed life of the trenches, with the proverbial British cheeriness and will to see it through, the great sequence of the attack, after the barrage, when Doe's and Ray's company go over the top—these challenge and exceed in cinematic technique and power, in rhythm and dramatic impact, the best in *Potenkin*, *All Quiet* and *Comrades of 1918*. This is the finest of the war films.

Grand Hotel

Adapted from the play by Vicki Baum by William A. Drake, directed by Edmund Goulding, photographed by William Daniels. Produced and distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The Cast

<i>Grusinskaya, the dancer</i>	<i>Greta Garbo</i>
<i>The Baron</i>	<i>John Barrymore</i>
<i>Flaemmchen, the stenographer</i>	<i>Joan Crawford</i>
<i>General Director Preysing</i>	<i>Wallace Beery</i>
<i>Otto Kringelein</i>	<i>Lionel Barrymore</i>
<i>Doctor Otternschlag</i>	<i>Lewis Stone</i>
<i>Senf, the porter</i>	<i>Jean Hersholt</i>
<i>Pinenov</i>	<i>Ferdinand Gottschalk</i>
<i>Suzette</i>	<i>Rafaela Ottiano</i>

YOU could not sit through *Grand Hotel* and not find it engrossing fare; but that much was destined; you knew it, even before a single crank turned, before a foot of film was recorded; the very magnitude of everything and everyone assembled to form the complete unit assured you of that—the biggest smash hit of many a season—enough stars to turn out a half dozen program pictures—the theme: a cross-section of life, taking it and then leaving it where you found it—a story without a beginning and with no ending. All of which makes the movie a difficult subject for classification.

Your reviewer did not see the stage play. However, comparing the two from first-hand information, the play's strong point becomes the picture's weakness. A great deal of the success of the original "Grand Hotel" came from applying motion picture technique—revolving floors, interchangeable

sets, traveling spotlight and lightning changes of scenes, approximating the camera angle and the traveling lens, first introduced on the stage by Max Reinhardt in Berlin and improved upon here by Herman Shumlin. The theatre-goer was awed by the unexpected illusion of motion behind the footlights. Naturally, in the course of transition, this novelty is reduced to an everyday screen necessity. Nevertheless, the material was prepared with an eye to Hollywood and backed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer; it was easily convertible, from a standpoint of action, and it is easy to believe that the spirit, if not the last drop of drama, of the original is well preserved; a more careful scrutiny might reveal that the interwoven plots seem to fall somewhat short of building suspensefully to clearly defined climaxes, but on the other hand, a crazy-quilt is hard put to preserve the identity of the whole without tracing the thread of each pattern. Concisely: there is interest in abundance, but how much punch there is in each plot is another thing. Needless to say, though, plot and counterplot more than make up for any individual shortcomings.

Acting honors go equally to Garbo and Lionel Barrymore. Garbo is more elastic than she has ever been, achieving with—for her—amazing liteness, the sudden contrasting moods, the heights and depths of the dancer's erotic soul. Her face is photographed thought. She is supreme. The shadows that pause fleetingly, elf-like, on Grusinskaya's countenance are shining mirrors of the mind.

Lionel Barrymore surpasses himself in subordinating his familiar mannerisms to the exigencies of the pathetic, timid Kringelein, the doomed invalid blowing the last big, gaudy bubble of life. Only a shade less worthy is John Barrymore, not merely a profile, but Vicki Baum's Baron to the last hair. Indeed, his love scenes with Garbo possess a lyric quality that is the picture's highlight. Joan Crawford does well with Flaemmchen; she is individual but not outstanding. Wallace Beery, relying on an ac-



The fight in the factory in "Golden Mountains"

cent to characterize Preysing, does nothing that any standard type would not have done. The accent seemed out of place. Lewis Stone and Jean Hersholt, with countless but equally effective bits by lesser characters, give the proper finishing touches to the bird's-eye and keyhole views of a cycle of restless humanity.

Edmund Goulding had a difficult task on his hands and has done a commendable piece of work. Camera work is good, settings and lighting lavish. It has been said that each of the five principals has an equal amount of footage. This is not so. Lionel Barrymore has quite the most, followed closely by John. Crawford and Garbo are about evenly divided, with Beery trailing. The presence of them all does not necessarily make a masterpiece; the treatment is deft, without setting any new standard in film technique. Perhaps you will find joy

where you expected ecstasy, sorrow rather than despair; but whatever your taste, *Grand Hotel* is vastly entertaining.—

J. A. McA.

Golden Mountains

Scenario by A. Mikhailovsky, V. Nedobrovo, S. Yutkevitch and L. Arnshtem, musical score by Dmitri Shostakovitch, directed by Sergei Yutkevitch, photographed by I. Martov. Produced by Sovkino, distributed by Amkino.

The cast

<i>Peter</i>	<i>Boris Poslavsky</i>
<i>The Boss</i>	<i>J. V. Korvin-Krukovsky</i>
<i>His Son</i>	<i>B. Fedosiev</i>
<i>Vasily</i>	<i>I. Shtraukh</i>
<i>Boris</i>	<i>E. Tenin</i>
<i>The Foreman</i>	<i>M. Michurin</i>

THE formula of the recent Russian films, as they come to us, seems to have settled definitely upon one thing—conversion. Their religion being Marxian

socialism, vitally infused with the spirit of Lenin; every conversion to that faith and practice, in these early years, has enormous significance to them, and the films that picture those conversions have the power that comes from the tremendous sincerity of religious conviction.

It was so with *Road to Life*, which showed the conversion—the “saving”—of the wild boys. *Golden Mountains*, going back into the unsettled days when workers were not effectively united and the rich preyed upon the poor, shows the conversion of a peasant.

It is a simple enough tale, with hero and villain and struggle—villain triumphant for a while till things turn, a quick crash of conflict, and the hero—and his cause—gets into step with the conquering future. It has various familiar elements of the Soviet film-formula—the sickly, moribund oppressors, soul-dead in vast palaces among cringing servants; the hypocritical, crawling middlemen; the caricatured priesthood; the virile workers; the earthy peasant quickening from mere clod into life and growth. But somehow the stock pattern, with its usual array of stock figures, has an unusual kind of life, in a Russian film, apart from the vigor of its purpose: as if the director had an irrepressible affection for his people as human beings which colored his use of them as instruments in the furthering of a cause. About the Boss, for instance, talking French in his wheel-chair, clings still a ruined worldly grace of other times, just as in his son, though his actions are obviously part of a wicked system to the mind acquainted with the Soviet ideology, there is a charm that is a part of personality and insidiously hostile to propaganda. In short, the fierce, stark black-and-white characterizations of the usual Russian film are tempered by an unusual gentleness, a subtle admission that the horns and tail were not invariably visible in every member of the old regime, and that strains of vanity and stupidity may lurk in a peasant hero.

Which gives the film a more human quality for those who are interested in it purely as a story and as a picture, and not in its Marxian orthodoxy. Its story interest is increased also because it is more the story of a man than of a social movement, and of a man with the quaint old desires for “rivers flowing wine, and golden mountains all aglow.” To be strictly accurate, he wanted a horse, on which he dreamed of riding in splendor. And it is a rather far cry from the tractors and cream separators and shower baths and steam engines that have so often been presented as the supreme heart’s wish of every really worth while modern Russian. Which is no more than to say that here, for once, we have a Soviet film which suggests that some things in the human heart do not change very much, whatever system they live under.

No one well acquainted with Russian films will be much excited by uncertainty about the outcome of the story, though he will be held by many of the incidental happenings and people. The peasant is sure to realize his mistakes and eventually join the striking comrades in their rebellion. But for the admirer of good cinema there is enormous excitement in watching how the film is made—the dramatic arrangement of figures and settings on the screen, the vivid but never too obtrusive manipulation of the camera, the eloquent creation of mood and situation through masterly combination of image and sound. Above all, the combination of music with the drama is made with rare skill—the “theme” song is really thematic, colored in its reappearances by the mood under which it reappears, and the rest of the orchestral accompaniment, instead of being a patchwork of songs and snatches of a popular musical library, is composed to fit and heighten the drama it accompanies.

Yutkevitch, unlike some of his eminent confreres among Russian directors, uses trained actors, among whom Boris Poslavsky stands out for some memorable moments in this film.—J. S. H.

Der Raub der Mona Lisa

(The Theft of the Mona Lisa)

Scenario by Walter Reisch, directed by Geza von Bolvary, music composed by Robert Stolz. Produced by Tobis, distributed by Tobis-Foren-films.

Vincenzo Perugia.....Willy Forst
Mathilde.....Trude von Molo
An Art Agent.....Gustav Gruendgens
The Director of the Louvre.....Fritz Odemar
The Chief Inspector of the Louvre.....

Max Guelstorf
The Police Commissioner.....Roda Roda
A Traveling Salesman.....Anton Pointner
The Landlady.....Rosa Valetti
The Orator.....Alexander Granach

German films usually err on the side of the serious, the thick-bodied in text and texture, the solid in detail and the melodramatic in direction. But in this film Geza von Bolvary, the director, returns to the Till Eugenspiegel tradition, and has added another to the lighter than slapstick, a comedy of easy surfaces and disturbing irony, that devastates in a few delicious reels the formidable body of Mona Lisa worship, the Pater tradition, and the sentimental overtones that have all but blasted its value as a portrait.

Von Bolvary in this comic fantasia in one key has created his characters with the same flair for pertinent and comic detail in action and in character as René Clair; his museum porter is as blandly satirized as is the faithless lady of the sensuous da Vinci smile, the actress Trude von Molo, who plays the hotel

THE Theft of the Mona Lisa is the first film to come out of the German studios since the long publicized and still longer melodized *Zwei Herzen* that has the same quality of irony and quizzical humor as the films of René Clair.



*The Giaconda smile is responsible for a curious robbery in
"The Theft of the Mona Lisa"*

maid for whom an Italian glazier steals the portrait from the Louvre.

The Theft of the Mona Lisa may not be an important film in the sense that a war film is important; it will never be the precursor of a school, either for film comedy or for sound technique. Technically, it presents no divagation from the Clair school, which in turn stems from Chaplin. But the material *per se* is fresh and it has its intellectual implications, and instead of presenting it as a serious and shadowed melodrama, von Bolvary has directed it so lightly and with so little overstatement that it has the effect of a Till Eugenspiegel gesture and belongs to the almost vanished nonsense tradition of the film.

Aside from the songs, the theme song and its accompaniments which belong to the strictly Irving Berlin-Mammy-Hollywood tradition, and are often too persistent for comfort, the film is irresistible. The basic idea of explaining the theft of the portrait from the Louvre as a gesture of an Italian

glazier in love with a hotel maid, who proceeded with accuracy and without humor to steal the da Vinci to impress her, and the casual way in which the lady refused the distinction and ran away with a traveling salesman who could buy her recognizable objects, is an impish one. The lady learns, too late, the honor that has been done her, and when the glazier is held for trial, she tries to renew his faith in women. The glazier, however, has renounced all that to become a national hero, and when asked why he had done it, says that he was avenging the Italian people on Napoleon.

The humor is swift and the pace of the film corresponds with it. There is probably no other film sequence of recent origin so devastating as that in which the glazier wheels his hurdy-gurdy through the piazzas of Italy, unmolested and unrecognized, with the Mona Lisa pasted openly on one of its sides. Aside from this, it is one of the few films of late that presupposes intelligence in an audience. For this alone, it deserves a few laurels.—E. G.

Critical Comment

Under this heading pictures will be discussed that in the judgment of the Exceptional Photoplays Committee do not gain the rating of Exceptional yet possess qualities that we have found our readers are interested in having talked about.

Flashback

THE formula of using the idea that in the last moment, or last seconds, or whatever length of time, a man about to die reviews his whole life, is not new. People interested in motion pictures probably best recall *The Last Moment*, in which Paul Fejos used his camera with remarkably effective style, and created an impressive "last moment" sense—without, however, creating any lasting impression of a human being who was any more than a puppet.

Now comes *Two Seconds*, which by taking a group of men assembled to witness an execution, makes the same assumption: that

in those last two seconds John Allen reviews his life. The effect is rather that those witnesses sit through a motion picture along with the audience than that while dying in the electric chair a man has flashes of the incidents that brought him there. Though the prologue and epilogue are neatly joined on to the main story, the story has no "last moment" sense—it is straight narrative.

Straight narrative acted out, as a play is acted out. But bursting with a rare vitality, for the screen, which actually reaches out and grips. It is done with no cinematic "style" whatever, in the sense the *The Last Moment* so abounded in style. But the time is past when camera angles and such incidentals of technique can in

themselves make an important motion picture: so does the lack of them not make a picture unimportant. It is too bad that someone with more picture sense did not write the script for *Two Seconds*, making it less like a series of photographed scenes from a play, *showing* more, paring down the excessive dialogue to essentials. Its treatment keeps the film from going up into the top ranks of motion pictures—but its power and insight as a psychological study make it something notably unusual.

The story is about a rivetter, a simple but oddly idealistic and ambitious man of no education but plenty of character and individuality. His pal is interested in women—he is interested in bettering his mind, which in its untutored way tends always to be curious about the psychology of things, and to a judgment of values that is always a product of its own thoughts. He becomes acquainted with a dance-hall girl, and interested in her; his friend sizes her up accurately enough as a tramp, but the rivetter, John, has an ideal of her that denies this, though his realistic instinct makes him shy away from marrying her. She gets him drunk, however, and through a wedding ceremony of a particularly sordid kind. Then, working high up on a skyscraper with his pal, and talking the whole thing over, he suddenly is shown what his wife really is—his shocked start of horror frightens his friend into losing his footing and falling to death. After that John loses his nerve: he cannot go up into those high places to work any more, he cannot find other work, his wife supports him on money that humiliates him, knowing its source, and he becomes sick, neurotic, crazed. A chance bit of luck in betting enables him to pay back what money she has spent on him—with that score settled, he shoots her, to clean himself, rid himself of a poison in his life, be a man again.

It is an unusually powerful depiction of a man's character, mind and soul, made doubly eloquent by the acting of Edward G. Robinson, who gives such a grilling perfor-

mance of tortured bewilderment as the screen rarely offers. A long essay might be written of this character and this actor, and the general question of how much the motion picture can accomplish in showing the workings of a man's mind, and how near or short this particular picture falls of doing what is possible. The important fact remains, in these days when pictures come and go and are hardly ever seen again, that here is a film for serious film-lovers to see while it is seeable.

One Visual Instruction Organization

(Continued from page 4)

existed. It is not necessary to consider the history of the organizations in order to determine the origin of the two for that is of no great importance to us at present. It is important that there is now but one outstanding visual instruction organization in the United States and that organization is the result of the merger of the two which existed formerly."

Mr. Dent reports further: "Several possible future developments as activities of the merged Department and Academy have been and are being considered. In the first place it is hoped that the new organization will become a clearing house of information, research, et cetera, among visual instruction workers, school executives, and others who may be interested in the further and more intelligent use of visual and other sensory aids. The establishment of such a clearing house will require first of all the establishment of an endowment or some other source of perpetual income to cover administrative costs. If this can be arranged, there is no reason why the new organization should not become one of the most influential groups in the educational field, not only in the United States but also among foreign countries.

"It is expected that local branches of the new organization will be established among the various states and larger cities through-

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What of the Cinema?

The English writer, F. Britten Austin, author, among many others, of "A Saga of the Sword," "A Saga of the Sea," "When Mankind Was Young" and "The War God Walks Again," was in New York City recently and in talking with him we spoke, of course, of motion pictures. As an experienced writer and traveler his opinions expressed in answer to our questions come from wide observation.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

WHAT of the American motion picture? It seems to me that Hollywood—as an institution—is committing suicide. All too evidently, it thinks only in terms of the most patent commercialism—and so doing it stultifies even its own commercial ambitions. Deliberately, it plays *down* to what it believes to be the lowest common denominator of its audience. Once the public is conscious of this, it is instinctively and obscurely resentful. I have known many writers who, bitterly viewing the latest best seller, have said: "Evidently, what the public wants is hokum—I'll give it to 'em!" I have never known one such who succeeded in being a best seller. The public instinctively sensed the insult, and stayed away. The principle holds good throughout. The best-seller may be trash, but the writer *believed* in what he wrote. His sincerity made contact with the world of people on his own intellectual level. Hollywood believes only in the box-office, assuming that the public will not appreciate a genuine effort towards the artistic presentment of a theme. I am not advocating that one should be "high-brow"—much of what passes for high art is as moronic and infantile as the lowest, a mere cult of simplified ugliness that is easier than the attempt to achieve beauty. The first essential for success in any field is *sincerity* and sincerity is precisely what the American industry most conspicuously lacks. The only exception I would make is when it produces gangster-films—and there automatically it reflects the American public's very genuine interest in the subject.

What of British films? Habitually, I stay away from them because in my experience they have been nothing more than a copy—a very poor copy—in photographic technique, and in the pictorial unfolding of a story, of the American commercial product. The only good British films I have personally seen are those in which the professional movie people have been more or less under the control of non-movie authority—for example, British Instructional Films like *Tell England* and *The Falkland Battle*, both made under the supervision of the British Admiralty. Incidentally, these proved to be commercial successes if not colossally great ones.

How do American historical films compare with European in accuracy? In my experience, European films tend to be more historically accurate than American. Does this matter? I think it matters immensely. The truth is always better. Granted that most of the audience may be incapable of recognizing the inaccuracies; for those who do recognize them the illusion is destroyed. On a lower ground, it costs no more to be accurate than to be all wrong, and one might as well please the entire audience instead of only a part of it.

What is the effect of the cinema on native audiences in Asia and Africa? With the exception of Soviet films in parts of Asia, native audiences never see any films other than American films. The Soviet films are of course deliberately propagandist, and no doubt have a revolutionary effect. But they have nothing like so revolutionary an effect as the ordinary American film of commerce. Nothing so destructive to the prestige of the white man has ever happened. In the past the white man and especially the white woman was sacredly a superior being from another world. Now the black, brown and yellow crowd into the movie-houses to witness hilariously, the spectacle of these over-

lords behaving with what to the barbarian is incredible shamelessness. It may be anyhow that the 19th century dominance of white intruders is doomed, but more than anything the white man's movie will have hastened its passing.

What of films as propaganda? The potential propaganda value of the cinema is incomparably greater than that of any other agent. The human mind receives its most enduring impressions through the eye and not through the ear. But it is essential that the propaganda *purpose* should not be evident, or it is immediately discounted. The most effective propaganda is that which is unconscious. The American movie has popularised—quite incidentally—American products all over the globe as nothing else could have done.

What of the educational value of films? In so far of course, as educational films make learning *easy* they are rather of negative value. The purpose of education is not merely to pour a mass of information into the mind, but to train the mind to think for itself, and to habituate it to overcome difficulties and its own natural laziness. On the other hand, in so far as educational films ensure that the visualization of an imparted fact shall be an exactly accurate visualization and not an almost certainly imperfect imaginative rendering of a written word, they are of enormous positive value not previously or otherwise to be paralleled. Millions upon millions, not only of children but of adults, have thanks to them—for the first time in the history of the world—an exactly accurate picture in their minds not only of the processes of plant and animal life, of the diverse scenery of the globe, but of the normal daily life of their diversely pigmented and diversely customed brothers and sisters all over the world. This is a novel phenomenon of vast import to the future of humanity. The traditional race images with which peoples formulate their dislike of one another—the big-paunched greedy John Bull, the leanly avaricious Uncle Sam, the dandiacally absurd French-

man—vanish in contact with the fact. The ogres and the bogies turn out to be good kindly hardworking folk much as ourselves. Personally, I think that the newsreels now becoming increasingly popular—there are three theatres exclusively devoted to them in London, and three in Paris, and I understand also similar theatres in America—are of the greatest possible educational value.

With all its faults the movie is the greatest instrument yet devised to raise the 99 per cent ignorant masses to a higher level of culture. The talkie has immensely increased its potentiality, of course, as a culture-agency. It is still only at the beginning of achievements hardly to be imagined.

B. G.

One Visual Instruction Organization

(Continued from page 12)

out the United States. These local groups are composed of members of the national organization who desire to meet more often than twice each year and to give special consideration to local problems. Reports of the meetings of these groups will be available through the central clearing house and should be of interest to similar groups in all other parts of the country. This consolidation of the visual instruction forces would seem to aid much in the solution of many of the teacher training and research problems in the field today. There is every reason to believe that the merged organization will become a leader almost at once and that it will, because of this leadership, receive the undivided support of both educators and commercial organizations, which are interested in the production and distribution of visual aids."

This merger it seems to us adds more convincing argument to the value of unifying like efforts into one organization. Any community, we all believe, can do much more in better films activity if it can combine the interest of many groups into a city-wide Council.

Motion Pictures and Parent Education

By MRS. EVA vB. HANSL

As staff associate of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection and associate editor of the Parents Magazine, and being a parent herself, Mrs. Hansl is well able to write authoritatively on the subject of parent education and what she has to say of it in relation to the motion picture is of especial interest here.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

BEING a parent is a liberal education in itself, as every parent knows. And since there is no competition and no unemployment in parenthood one can probably learn less and get away with it more easily in this than in any other occupation. The kind of parental education derived from motion pictures is dispensed by the producers and disseminated by the children. Before my children began to go to the movies, I knew very little about life. Now, I know a great deal, most of which is not so.

The motion picture with sound is the greatest educational force in existence today. If we may assume the estimate to be approximate—that we derive sixty per cent of our information through the eye and fifteen per cent through the ear—then we must admit that through the “talkie” we should be able to get about as much knowledge as we can hold. But do we? The talkies represent an educational force such as we have never had before. Like any other force it is formidable and frightening and can be used for our good or our destruction. What are we parents doing with it? In the main it seems to me we are trying to dodge it. We have a sort of naive hope that if we do not see it coming, it is not going to hit us. Of course, the only thing to do is to meet it head-on. We can use it as a great opportunity for education for ourselves as well as our children or we can leave it free to do with us what it will.

Most of the parents I know are of one or two sorts: those who condemn all movies and will not let their children go to any and thereby lose a great many real benefits; and those who regard the movies as a safe parking place and thank Hollywood for giving

them a few hours of peace every day. Each is, of course, as foolish as the other. It is unintelligent, to say the least, to believe that if you do not let your children go to the movies at all they will never get the fan fever. Probably once they have their freedom they will go drunk with the wine of the cinema and lose all sense of judgment in a sudden welter of movie madness. It is just as unintelligent to allow our children to go to see any film without discrimination; to permit movie-going to become a habit; to use it as a bribe or a reward for good behavior; to allow it to replace recreational activities or all other pursuits of leisure time.

What then is the middle course? I read somewhere that when parents do go to the movies with their children it is to the picture which *they themselves* want to see. This, I think, is an unfair assertion. What is probably more nearly true is that they do not go with their children often enough. They do not know what the children are seeing. They do not know what there is to see or where to go to see something different. They do not know how the pictures are affecting their children because they do not know enough about them to discuss them intelligently. And so, of course, the children exclude their parents from their cinema world which oftentimes becomes more real than the one in which they are actually living.

The middle course, as I see it, runs between the Scylla of Intolerance and the Charybdis of Indifference. The compass by which to steer this course is a definite policy. Since it is extremely difficult for any individual to take a stand which is opposed to that of the majority in the community, it becomes almost necessary in this day of easy communication and difficult virtue to obtain the necessary moral backing for the protection of that definite policy by combining with a group of other parents to subscribe to a common policy or standard. Feeling sharply the necessity for doing this, a group

of mothers in our town drew up the following recommendations which were presented at the last meeting of our Parents' League: One—attendance at motion pictures by children under 10 years of age is not *countenanced*; (We had a great time finding that nice word.) Two—attendance at an evening performance preceding a school day should be prohibited. (We were not so choice with that word.); Three—no children under fifteen should go unless accompanied by an adult; Four—to go only to pictures recommended for “the family.”

If we can get a number of other people to subscribe to such tenets as these which we consider fundamental and simple, perhaps we shall have an answer at least concerning the movies to that most annoying question which comes up every single day: “If Mary Jane can do it, why can’t I?”

The next thing to do, of course, once you have achieved a little solidarity among neighbors, is to work with the manager of the neighborhood or the local theater to procure the kind of pictures you want for the family to see, at least for the week-end showings. It is being done in many places against heavy odds but in sufficient instances to show that it can be done.

This means, of course selection. How do we know what is good? What is a good motion picture for children to see, anyhow? Does anyone really know? Parenthetically, I should like to say that I wish the National Committee on Social Values in Motion Pictures would publish some of their valuable reports and research studies, for then we might get answers to some of these questions. Up to now we can only make guesses and venture opinions. At the present time there is hardly sufficient material at hand to use as a basis for a child study group discussion of what a child’s needs, reactions, values, attitudes or thought processes are in relation to motion pictures. We really know very little about this subject, though we are all, including myself, talking so glibly about it.

With the aid of many excellent lists pre-

pared by painstaking reviewers in all sorts of organizations, including this one, any parent may become informed as to the comparative desirability of one picture and another. There is no excuse for not knowing about the comparison rating of feature films, whether they are fit for children or for adults only. In the Parents’ Magazine we are now publishing a composite of five different lists. Unlike some other organizations we believe in publishing adverse criticism because we do not see how discrimination or judgment can be built up otherwise. Speaking as a mother who has been in far-away places where the picture shown left Broadway many, many months before, and is the only picture being shown in the only theater at hand, I was completely at a loss to know whether to let my children go to see it or not, when it was not listed as recommended. It might not be an A-1 picture—but if it was not downright pernicious or salacious, I might let them go. How was I to tell, save by going myself, first? The next day, when I might let them go if I had found it harmless—there was another! There is, I think, ample reason for publishing adverse criticism. In the case of motion pictures for children, I do not believe it is true to say that if you condemn a picture you immediately send the public to go to see it, i.e., if parents have any authority! But according to Mrs. Alice Miller Mitchell, who made a study of the movie attendance of 10,000 children in Chicago, only 1.6% had their pictures chosen for them by their parents.

Dr. John E. Anderson, Director of the Minnesota Institute of Child Welfare, whose children go to the movies, finds the effects beneficial rather than detrimental. Each attendance stimulates a host of questions he contends, the answering of which can be looked upon as a worth while educational process.

Herbert Spencer, you may remember, contended that to answer a child’s question is to give him an education. It is when the parent becomes interpreter that the real education takes place. Nothing so reveals one’s

ignorance as the answering of children's questions. Nothing is so difficult as to have to formulate your views, opinions and philosophies, in order to make them clear to another. It is not until you begin to discuss the morals, manners, ethics and behavior of the people on the screen that you discover how fuzzy are your ideas about these subjects, how muddled your own thinking, how mixed are prejudices, taboos, custom and tradition with logic, reason and the emotions. "Why can't a man have all the wives he wants?" is one of the questions one little boy asked his friend in my hearing after they had been to see a triangle play. "Why can't a woman have all the husbands she wants?" countered the other. "Well," mused the first one, "if they all had all the children they wanted, I suppose they would soon be living in a kind of hotel."

"Why is the audience clapping when the man kills his wife?" Why indeed? Do we know the answers? And if we do not, is it not up to us to find them?

If this is not an educational opportunity which the moving pictures are giving us parents, what is it? Pictures are to children, just because they have not experienced much of the life they see portrayed on the screen, a reality. Pictures have for them an authenticity which they do not really possess. It is a challenge to us to show them the difference between the real and the false, the true and the specious argument.

There are those who think the morals and standards of Main Street are not being affected by the moving picture. I do not see how they can help doing so. The gangster picture, I believe, is not as dangerous as *Comman Law*, and others of the same kind wherein loose living is richly rewarded and respectability is ridiculed. What are we going to set up to off-set a picture of that kind. What brief are we going to hold for decent living and moral values?

Besides these educational opportunities for parents presented by the movies, 1—of finding out what our children need in re-

spect to them, and how these needs should be met, 2—the selection of pictures and community effort for providing better pictures for children and 3—a discussion of the morals and manners of our times, an interpretation of life which is presented by the motion picture—there is the question of disciplines inherent in the situation. How often one may go; what to see? Are the motion pictures to be allowed to replace all reading, athletics or social activities; are the motion pictures to be used as a bribe or reward? It is no easy matter to determine what place in the life of the child the moving pictures may hold but new devices bring new disciplines and we must learn how best to use them.

Motion pictures are comparatively new. Parent education as a branch of adult education is even newer, that is, as an organized movement. If we parents make ourselves the force in our community *and in our families* that we might be, the industry will come to meet our needs because they need our full cooperation. But first, we must know what we want. Secondly, we must have the courage of our convictions; and, third, we must unite on our program. If we do that, then, in the end, I am sure we will be richly rewarded.

According to the Berlin press a company styled "Comedia-Tonfilm" has been established in Berlin to devote itself to the production of short films starring famous conductors, pianists and violinists. Production will be supervised by a Director of the Berlin High School of Music. These films, which will take ten to fifteen minutes to show, are to precede the feature and in view of their novelty and extreme artistic value it is believed that they will be gladly accepted by the public as a welcome change from the usual shorts.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

MANY adults have reviewed and pre-viewed the film *Alice in Wonderland* and have recorded opinions as to whether children would like it or not. Some said yes and some said no, with the why for of their judgments which seemed quite convincing. But when we saw some of the results of a questionnaire conducted following the showing of this film at a special matinee for children arranged through the cooperation of the Burlington (Vt.) Better Films Council, the school and a local exhibitor, we said: "Let the children speak for themselves." And here are examples of what they said. Pretty good critics and not hesitant about recording their estimates it seems.

"I liked *Alice in Wonderland* very much. I liked the part of the King and Queen dancing. And many other things of it. And wish you had more children pictures."—Age 9.

"I think *Alice in Wonderland* was splendid and should like very much to see another."—Age 10.

"I do wish that there would be another child picture, it was splenead."—Age 10.

"That show I didn't like because it left out the best parts and what they did put in was silly. On the whole it was terrible. It was not worth a dime."

"I never liked the book of 'Alice in Wonderland' therefore I didn't expect to like the picture. I thought that Ruth Gilbert taking the part of Alice talked queerly. I thought that there wasn't a good choice of scenes, why did they make so much of the court scene instead of the beautiful garden scene I thought the cat wasn't good, so on the whole I didn't like it."

"I did not like the first part of *Alice in Wonderland*, where she was getting acquainted. The rest of the play, I liked very much."

"I thought it was silly in some parts. And good in some parts."—Age 11.

"I thought it was very good. I liked it because it was funny like when the Cheshire cat was speaking to Alice."—Age 9.

"I thought that *Alice in Wonderland* was very interesting because it showed most of the characters that it tells in the book. It was also very humorous which is the thing I like."—Age 11.

"I thought it was very good they left a lot of it out."—Age 10.

"I thought it was very amusing and looked very natural for being a fairytail."—Age 11.

"I thought that it was very interesting. I think each character acted his or her part very good."—Age 11.

Please don't accuse us of these mistakes in spelling (of course, we are guilty of just as many but we believe most of them are corrected before they reach you), they were in the originals and we thought it more natural to leave them and hope the teachers of these pupils will forgive us for it, but when one has his mind on the thought so important in these dramatic reviews how can he think of details of spelling.

A group of young people in a Junior Review Committee were asked to write of their likes and dislikes on motion pictures. The result was some very interesting papers and we pass portions of them on to you through the following quotations from a few of them:

"The type of picture I like depends wholly on my frame of mind. One day I might like a weird picture or perhaps another time I might like a light comedy or perhaps I might even enjoy one of Slim Summerville's idiotic comedies. I thoroughly enjoy any western story and particularly Zane Grey's books portrayed in pictures. I enjoy the photography of his still stirring scenes on the prairie or up in the mountains with a lone rider wandering aim-

lessly about. I also enjoy pictures in which there is drama or when the leading character is very humorous."

"A great number of moving pictures produced today are not worth seeing. Some of these pictures have beautiful scenery, some are played by the finished actors and actresses. In some of the pictures the costumes are exceptional but all these good characteristics are often spoiled by the plot. There are very interesting characters in history, very important historical events which supply good subjects for production."

"It is not what one would call 'often' that I go to the movies but when I do go I go to get something definite. So before I go I make sure that 'something' is there waiting for me. Perhaps I am different from the average person. I do not know. But of one thing I am sure. I do not like to see murder pictures, gangster pictures, sickeningly mushy pictures or foolishly silly pictures. What is left? Why, that glorious picture that so realistically but beautifully depicts life."

"In my estimation what we need more than anything else is good, clean, elevating pictures with people in them that are worth our copying."

A long activity in child welfare has given Mrs. I. M. Rittenhouse a keen interest in the motion picture. Recently she has been spending some time in a small Virginia community and there, although it was supposed to be a rest period for her, she has concerned herself in talking and working for good pictures and their support.

At a meeting of the Women's Club, with an attendance from the local community and the county, where Mrs. Rittenhouse presented the subject of motion pictures, encouraging interest was shown and plans laid for a meeting not limited to the Women's Club but a community-wide get-together, for the theatre is a community affair. Mrs. Rittenhouse writes: "What I am going to urge is a group to study the films. There is a very large boys' school here, one of the

oldest colleges in the country near by, and in the town is a State Teachers' College made up of girls from all over Virginia. These boys and girls patronize the picture show in the town more than any others so it is most necessary to have better films. I find the manager of the theatre most anxious to cooperate in every way." An editorial in the local newspaper the day of this meeting focused attention upon it. This editorial shows such an insight into the question of theatre showings both from the public and the manager's viewpoint that we quote from it as follows: "There is a noticeable swing in the motion picture industry in recent months to the better class of pictures, and we think that the producers will find the public in sympathy with their endeavor to make more wholesome pictures. After all is said and done, the box office receipts govern the type of pictures that are produced and that are shown in local theatres. The intense love scenes, the dramatic tragedies, appeal to theatre-goers and fatten the box-office receipts. Still there are good comedies, pictures of educational subjects, which should be seen by all theatre-goers, but which alone would fail to attract sufficient attendance to make it profitable for the management.

"If the people would desire and patronize more of the educational class of pictures and if children would patronize the exclusive children's pictures the management of the theatre would go to all ends to meet the demand. One night a week might be selected at which time the theatre would show such pictures as are educational and instructive, and would satisfy the tastes of one group. The box-office receipts reflect the tastes of the theatre patrons, and should the experiment be tried, its success would depend largely on the amount of attendance.

We recognize that all theatre-goers have not the same taste and the management must appeal to all people. The daily newspaper that does not get some of the sensational news in its columns will feel a decrease in circulation. A murder story will increase

(Continued on page 23)

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

EDITOR

JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIED INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

*ATTORNEY FOR THE DEFENSE—Screen story by Jo Swerling, directed by Irving Cummings, with a cast headed by Edmund Lowe. Columbia, 7 reels. A clever prosecuting attorney who has sent many men across the bridge of sighs finally sends an innocent man to his death. In an effort to atone he adopts the man's small son and becomes attorney for the defense. The acting of the star is excellent and the story holds one's interest. *Mature audience.*

*THE CRY OF THE WORLD—Assembled from various newsreels, directed by Louis de Rochemont. Fox, 8 reels. Excellently produced educational picture which is strong propaganda for world peace. *Family audience.* See page 3.

*THE DOOMED BATTALION—Screen story by Louis Trenker, directed by Cyril Gardner, with a cast including Louis Trenker and Tala Birrell. Universal, 10 reels. Story of the World War in which an Austrian guide and an Italian who comes to the Austrian Alps every year, are separated by the War and forced to become enemies. The scenes in the mountains are marvelous and one gets a vivid impression of the horror and futility of war. The picture seems real and the people alive. *Mature audience.*

THE FAMOUS FERGUSON CASE—Screen story by Courtenay Terrett and Granville Moore, directed by Lloyd Bacon, with a cast including Joan Blondell, Grant Mitchell and Vivienne Osborne. First National, 7 reels. Newspaper story in which the New York press is called in on a murder case in a small town and succeeds in forcing the local officials to make false arrests and in upsetting the entire community generally. In the end the local re-

porter comes off with all the honors. *Mature audience.*

THE FLYING FOOL—Screen story by Ridley, Merrivale and Summers, directed by Walter Summers, with an English cast. Powers Productions, 7 reels. British-made mystery with a gay detective who gets into many very melodramatic adventures. The English setting and especially the authentic pictures of how things are managed at the airport and control station of the Imperial Airways, give it novelty and interest. *Family audience.*

HELL'S HEADQUARTERS—Screen story by Morton S. Parker, directed by Andrew L. Stone, with a cast headed by Jack Mulhall. Action, 6 reels. An African adventure picture with a hunt for hidden ivory, a very villainous villain and some wild animal perils that are not altogether convincing. A good deal of excitement however. *Family audience.*

ITALIA E MAMMA (Italy and Mother)—Directed by Nicolo Neroni, with an Italian cast. Claudia, 9 reels. A simple story of jealousy and repentance, with long interludes of scenery, singing and other music. Its chief appeal will be to Italian audiences interested in their homeland. There are both English and Italian subtitles and hardly any dialogue. *Family audience.*

*LETTY LYNTON—From the novel by Marie Belloc Lowndes, directed by Clarence Brown, with a cast headed by Joan Crawford and Robert Montgomery. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. Derived from the celebrated trial of Madeline Smith in Scotland, this is an excellent drama, so well built and characterized that only the end seems fiction. It is about a girl accused of murder. Very good production with Joan Crawford and Robert Montgomery at their best, also good minor roles. *Mature audience.*

MAN WANTED—Screen story by Robert Lord, directed by William Dieterle, with a cast headed by Kay Francis. Warner, 6 reels. Story of a magazine editress who works while her ne'er-do-well husband plays polo and flirts. She engages a young man as her secretary and of course falls in love. The story is light and

amusing and the acting of Miss Francis excellent. *Mature audience.*

MIDNIGHT PATROL—*From the story by George Jeske, directed by William Christy Cabanne, with a cast headed by Regis Toomey. Monogram, 6 reels.* A newspaper man solves a murder mystery in a lively and well built melodrama with pleasant people and exciting happenings. *Family audience.*

NIGHT COURT—*Screen story by Mark Hellinger and Charles Beahan, directed by W. S. Van Dyke, with a cast including Walter Huston, Phillips Holmes and Anita Page. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 10 reels.* Melodrama of a young couple who become involved in a crooked judge's efforts to escape justice. Very effective in a theatrical way but being theatrical it fails to be the important drama of political evils that it might have been. Excellently done as a production. *Mature audience.*

THE NIGHT WORLD—*Screen story by P. J. Wolfson, directed by Hobart Henley, with a cast including Leta Ayres, Mae Clarke and Boris Karloff. Universal, 6 reels.* Drama of New York night life. A wealthy boy disillusioned with life falls in love with a night club entertainer. The story is entertaining. *Mature audience.*

RIDERS OF THE DESERT—*Screen story by Welwyn Totman, directed by Robert M. Bradbury, with a cast headed by Bob Steele. Sono Art-World Wide, 6 reels.* A fast moving melodrama of the West full of action and galloping horses. Exciting fare for the juvenile. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SHOP ANGEL—*From the story by Isola Forrester, directed by E. Mason Hopper, with a cast including Marion Shilling, Holmes Herbert and Anthony Bushell. Tower Productions, 7 reels.* Well made picture of a charming fashion buyer and how her wits got her through many intrigues and troubles. *Mature audience.*

SKY BRIDE—*Screen story by Mankiewicz, Leahy and G. Jones, directed by Stephen Roberts, with a cast including Richard Arlen, Jack Oakie and Robert Coogan. Paramount, 8 reels.* An interesting story of stunt flying. During an exhibition one of the fliers is accidentally killed by his pal who determines never to fly again. He is brought back to a saner attitude through the help of his friends and the love of a girl. The flying is extraordinary. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

***SO BIG**—*From the novel by Edna Ferber, directed by William Wellman, with a cast including Barbara Stanwyck, George Brent and Dickie Moore. Warner, 7 reels.* The story of a woman's struggle to make a living for her son and her ultimate triumph. Barbara Stanwyck is very convincing in her portrayal of the hard-working mother. The camera work and the direction are both excellent. *Family audience.*

***SOIL IS THIRSTY**—*Screen story by S. Yermolinsky, directed by M. Raisman. Ankino, 7 reels.* A simple and forceful story of bringing water to the Asiatic desert by the new Russian government. Aside from its strong and direct story it is very interesting cinematically. Some Russian dialogue made understandable by inserted English subtitles. *Family audience.*

TEXAS PIONEERS—*Screen story and direction by Harry Fraser, with a cast headed by Bill Cody. Monogram, 5 reels.* An old-fashioned story of log forts, covered wagons and Indian fighting. Typically juvenile. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THEY NEVER COME BACK—*Screen story by A. Hoerle and Sherman Lowe, directed by Fred Newmayer, with a cast headed by Regis Toomey. Artclass, 7 reels.* Story of an ex-prizefighter and night club life, not particularly original in plot but done with good characterizations by the actors and lively direction that brings out all the human and humorous points. *Family audience.*

THIS IS THE NIGHT—*From the stage play by Avery Hopwood, directed by Frank Tuttle, with a cast including Lily Damita, Charles Ruggles and Roland Young. Paramount, 9 reels.* A French farce for the sophisticated audience. In order to be near the woman he loves and to keep her husband from becoming suspicious, a man employs a girl to act as his wife. The music could be better but the direction is excellent and the comedy most amusing. *Mature audience.*

THE TRIAL OF VIVIENNE WARE—*From the story by Kenneth M. Ellis, directed by William K. Howard, with a cast including Joan Bennett, Donald Cook and Zasu Pitts. Fox, 5 reels.* A sensational and rather crude murder trial story given liveliness, life and pointed humor by exceedingly good direction. *Mature audience.*

TROTTE TEODOR—*From the story by Solve Cedarstrom, directed by Gustaf Edgren, with a Swedish cast. Scandinavian Films, 7 reels.* A comedy with a very complicated but cleverly worked out plot concerning the efforts of a father and son to help along the career of a charming young ballet dancer. Pictorially it has all the excellences of the silent Swedish films, and as entertainment it is excellent for those who know the language. *Family audience.*

VANITY FAIR—*From the novel by William Thackeray, directed by Chester Franklin, with a cast including Myrna Loy and Conway Tearle. Allied, 7 reels.* Modern version of the well known novel. Becky Sharpe, a gold-digger out for what she can get finds that the "easiest way" is not always so easy. Though the story is modernized, the action is slow. *Mature audience.*

***THE WET PARADE**—*From the novel by Upton Sinclair, directed by Victor Fleming, with a cast including Walter Huston, Jimmy*

Durante, Dorothy Jordan and Neil Hamilton. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 14 reels (Reviewed in the Exceptional Photoplays Department of the April National Board of Review Magazine). A sincere and serious picture dealing with a great and urgent problem. It is a fierce indictment of liquor but an equally fierce indictment of our present method of liquor control. It presents conditions but offers no solution. Marked for mature audiences because it is long and rather heavy—there is nothing in it that does not deserve family consideration. *Mature audience.*

WHEN A FELLER NEEDS A FRIEND—*From the Story "Limpy" by William Johnston, directed by Harry Pollard, with a cast including Jackie Cooper and Chic Sale. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 8 reels.* The story of a lame boy and how he was saved from being a spoiled and moral weakling. A good deal of humor and a great many tears. Jackie Cooper is as remarkable as ever and Chic Sale plays an eccentric part in his characteristic style. Suggested for church use. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE WOMAN IN ROOM 13—*From the play by Shipman, Marcin and Wilde, directed by Henry King, with a cast including Elissa Landi, Neil Hamilton and Ralph Bellamy. Fox, 7 reels.* A melodrama about an unscrupulous villain who manages to have his ex-wife and her husband accused of murder. Good production, good acting and good direction give more distinction than the story contains in itself. *Mature audience.*

YOUNG AMERICA—From the play by Fred Ballard, directed by Frank Borzage, with a cast including Raymond Borzage, Spencer Tracy and Tommy Conlon. Fox, 7 reels.* Moving and interesting story of the juvenile court in a small town. The judge of the court believes in helping the youths to go straight by putting them on probation instead of sending them to institutions. The picture also stresses the effect of environment on the lives of children. The picture is well directed and the acting of Raymond Borzage excellent. *Family audience.*

ZAPPATORE (The Toiler)—*Screen story by L. Bovio and Guido Albano, with an Italian cast. Napoli, 8 reels.* An Italian story of family sacrifice for a son, his selfishness and eventual repentance. Extremely simple in all its acts and emotions, likely to appeal only to Italian audiences. English subtitles and occasional bits of spoken Italian dialogue. *Family audience.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

The Battle of Gallipoli—9 rls.

Suggested for schools, churches, et cetera, as education against war.
Family audience.

Golden Mountains—8 rls.

Mature audience.

Grand Hotel—12 rls.

Mature audience.

Der Raub der Mona Lisa

Mature audience.

SHORT SUBJECTS

BARNYARD OLYMPICS (Mickey Mouse Cartoon)—*Columbia, 1 reel.* The animals hold an Olympic meet of their own. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BELIEVE IT OR NOT NO. 8—*Vitaphone, 1 reel.* Ripley gives more astonishing facts including a wealthy woman who leaves money to put clothes on snowmen; an African native who is a grandmother at 17, et cetera. *Family audience.*

THE BIRTH OF JAZZ (Krazy Kat Cartoon)—*Columbia, 1 reel.* Jazz is born and the world goes jazz crazy. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BOSKO'S PARTY (Looney Tune)—*Vitaphone, 1 reel.* Bosko entertains his friends. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

COLOR SCALES—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1 reel.* Technicolor picture of the fish in the San Francisco aquarium. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

COUNTY HOSPITAL—*Laurel and Hardy, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels.* Mr. Hardy, in the hospital is visited by Mr. Laurel, with characteristic results. *Family audience.*

CURIOSITIES No. 233—*Columbia, 1 reel.* Hunting the Mexican jumping bean; waterfall in the West that turns objects to stone; an old watchmaker and his curious and antique collection; et cetera. *Family audience.*

FREDDY THE FRESHMAN (Merry Melody Cartoon)—*Vitaphone, 1 reel.* Another amusing song number. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE GOOD OLD DAYS (Brevities)—*Universal, 1 reel.* Motion picture stars in the early days—Gloria Swanson, Norma Talmadge, Wallace Beery, Lon Chaney and others. *Family audience.*

GOOPIE GEER (Merry Melody Cartoon)—*Vitaphone, 1 reel.* Amusing cartoon featuring the popular tune. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

HAPPY POLO (Aesop Fable)—*RKO-Pathe, 1 reel.* The hero plays some strange polo and then leaves the field to save his sweetheart. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

IN THE BAG (Tom and Jerry Cartoon)—*RKO-Radio*, 1 reel. The two friends capture the wicked bandit. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

LET'S EAT (Oswald Cartoon)—*Universal*, 1 reel. Oswald goes fishing for food but is done out of his dinner. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MAGIC ART (Aesop Fable)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. Strange things come out of the artist's paints. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MAYBE I'M WRONG—*Richey Craig, Vitaphone*, 2 reels. An amusing comedy of a town where everyone is more or less crazy. *Family audience.*

MEET THE WINNER—*Tom Howard, Paramount*, 1 reel. Very amusing satire on the prize ring. One of the audience shows his friend how the fighters should fight. *Family audience.*

MILADY'S ESCAPADE—*Educational* 2 reels. The opera "Martha" shortened to two reels. It retains all of its most delightful melodies and its absurd ballet. Well sung and musically delightful. *Family audience.*

OH! HOW I HATE TO GET UP IN THE MORNING (Bouncing Ball Cartoon)—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Comedy song cartoon of Irving Berlin's famous war song. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 9—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Beautiful birds from many countries; miners sing at their work; et cetera. *Family audience.*

PATHE REVIEW NOS. 9-10—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel each. Everything's going lower!; new wonderland discovered in Pennsylvania; financial philosophy from fishes; et cetera. *Family audience.*

THE POOCH—*Our Gang, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 reels. A Skippy-like comedy about kids and dogs without any tears. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PUPPY LOVE (Flip the Frog Cartoon)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. A dog is rescued from the pound. *Family audience.*

RIA ROSA—*Napoli*, 2 reels. Ria Rosa, a large and emotional singer, gives her interpretation of four Neapolitan songs. *Family audience.*

ROMANCE (Terrytoons)—*Educational*, 1 reel. Imitative of Mickey and Krazy Kat but amusing. *Family audience.*

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NOS. 8 & 10—*Columbia*, 1 reel each. The former contains pictures of the stars who have gone—the latter a debate on prohibition between Aimee Semple McPherson and Walter Huston. *Family audience.*

SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 10—*Paramount*, 1 reel. 1904 Easter parade at Atlantic City; 1909 William Howard Taft attends a baseball game in Chicago; et cetera. *Family audience.*

THE SHADOW OF THE EAGLE (serial)—*John Wayne, Dorothy Gulliver, Mascot*, 12 episodes, 2 reels each. A story with a mysterious man known as "The Eagle" as the villain, revolving around a stolen invention, a circus carnival, and an airplane that writes warnings in the sky. A typical serial with several good actors in the cast, well enough done to please the usual serial audience. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 18—*Universal*, 1 reel. Strange things from all over the world—a one-legged boy who is an all-around athlete; curious marine life; et cetera. *Family audience.*

THE STRANGE WEDDING SIGN—*Film Exchange*, 1 reel. An interesting film showing the origin of the common superstition that crossed hands signify a marriage. *Family audience.*

(Continued from page 19)

the circulation of the average daily more than the text of the President's address to Congress. When catering to the masses a varied selection of subjects must be used. In the case of the newspaper a reader will choose what he wishes to read and will pass by those things that do not appeal to him. The theatre like the newspaper must serve its patrons and meet their demands."

ADDRESSING representatives of the Methodist Church from all quarters of the world, gathered at the ecumenical conference, on the subject, "The Press and Motion Pictures as International Factors," the Rev. Thomas Tiplady, of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Great Britain, said that although a certain amount of censorship is necessary, the danger of too much should be recognized. "Let us not make the mistake the Puritans made when they closed the theatres," he added. "Let us rather educate the people. Public opinion is the final censorship." He prophesied that all churches twenty-five years from now will have motion picture apparatus and that noted pastors will address millions through talking pictures.

THE BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL
of the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures
offers through its
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An Opportunity to Promote
Better Motion Picture Programs in Your Home Theatre

The Better Films Committee or Motion Picture Study Club plan has been found by many communities to be an adaptable and effective method of accomplishing telling organized local work for better pictures.

The purposes of the Better Films Committees affiliated with the Better Films National Council are:

To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. VII, No. 6



June, 1932



Garbo, the lady of mystery in "As You Desire Me" (see page 8)

*Published monthly, except July and August, by the
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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees: **The General Committee**—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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Motion Pictures in Public Recreation

By F. S. MATHEWSON

At this season of the year those working in community better films activities may find that there is more interest in outdoor recreation than in motion pictures. But the two can be linked in a community recreational program as described by Mr. Mathewson in the following account telling how he has done it in his work. Mr. Mathewson is at present carrying on one of the outstanding pieces of community recreation in the country as Superintendent of Recreation of the Union County (N. J.) Park Commission. This position he has held since 1927, previous to this he was Director of Recreation in Plainfield, N. J., and Executive Secretary of Community Service in Hamilton-Wenham, Mass. —EDITOR'S NOTE.

IT is doubtful if there is anything particularly new that can be said on this subject. However, a review of the facts may be of some interest. And from it there could be ideas derived which might prove of exceeding value to some in furthering their activities program for the recreational enjoyment of the masses.

We are all more or less familiar with open air moving picture shows, which, in the past, have been shown in public parks, municipal playgrounds, county fair grounds, stadiums, and athletic fields. These performances have been held in connection with band concerts, community singing, lectures, and public talks. In some cases the program consists of features and comedies comparable with the local theatre program, while in other instances the introduction of one or two reels of educational film has resulted in placing the presentation in another classification.

Many Recreation Departments own their own projectors, sometimes standard width 35 m/m and in other cases the 16 m/m. Entertainments are presented as a recreational feature in children's homes, veterans' hospitals, institutions for the aged, deaf, et cetera. It is believed that this is truly a most excellent service to render, as otherwise it is questionable whether or not some of these individuals would have any contact whatsoever with the outside world. I personally have projected pictures in a home housing about 65 orphans ranging in ages from 6 to 16, and many of them viewed motion pictures for the first time as a result of my visit.

Formerly a strong argument for out-of-door movies took the form of condemning the theatre for being uncomfortable on hot sticky summer evenings. However, with the development of the modern cooling system this opportunity for criticism is absent, and a public body promoting out-of-door programs on an elaborate scale might be accused of competing with private interests.

The use of motion pictures with nature study groups has been of great value, especially in the early stages of the organization of these clubs. Films depicting the snow-capped peaks of the Rockies, the birds of Bonaventure, our National Parks and others of this type have encouraged the attendance of the general public to the initial

meeting, and later individuals have developed a keen interest in the nature program as a result of their first contact in this form.

My assistant, who is in charge of the nature work with the Union County Park Commission, has organized six of these clubs, and motion pictures have been and are still being used extensively in their monthly programs. Films are secured from the American Museum of Natural History, the United States Department of Commerce, the Y. M. C. A. Motion Picture Bureau, New Jersey State Museum, et cetera. Too much, however, cannot be expected of the movie in the teaching of nature. At best the movie is only a picture of the real thing. To glean the secrets of nature actual contact with the real thing is necessary. To see and hear a whip-o-will at twilight on a summer's evening, to watch and study the beaver at his work, the cottontail in his native haunts, will do more to develop a child's interest in nature and educate the adult, than ten thousand feet of especially prepared film.

The magazine *Field and Stream** has available remarkable reels depicting out-of-door life on the plain, mountain, and stream. These have been used extensively for showing before the Fish and Game Associations, Isaac Walton Leagues, Camp Fire Girls, et cetera. They never fail to produce a thrill for the red-blooded sportsman who is, because of necessity, confined to the office eleven and a half months of each year, and longs to get hold of a rod and land a few of the "big ones," apparently so easily hooked by those shown on the screen.

Many public Recreation Departments have their own cameras. Pictures are taken of their activities and projected before luncheon clubs, women's organizations, civic clubs, P.-T. A.'s, in the interest of educating the general public in the value of the recreation program. The Union County Park Commission has several thousand feet

of such films, of which two reels of special interest have been shown several hundred times before practically every organization in the County and neighboring cities and towns. Special events have been photographed, quickly developed, and taken to neighboring theatres that are glad to attach them to the newsreels because of the local interest value. This all helps to popularize and sell the recreation program.

In Charlotte, North Carolina, the local Director of Recreation has used motion pictures of activities to a good advantage by projecting them before the Playground Training Classes, illustrating the good and not-so-good points in supervision.

In some small communities the Community House is the only moving picture theatre in town, and here on one or two nights each week pictures are shown. The films are carefully selected by a civic-minded committee whose job it is to handle the details of these weekly or twice-weekly performances. Profits realized from these shows are used to meet the expenses of the local recreation program. I was associated with just such a project in Massachusetts for a period of two years and can vouch for the enjoyment of the patrons of these performances.

The Grantland Rice Sportlights have been used extensively before athletic clubs, college groups, and others, in addition to the regular theatre releases.

A few strictly propaganda films for playgrounds and public recreation have been released. The most notable among these was *Playtime*, a two reel film financed by The Women's City Club of New York, and distributed by Pathe. The real value of such films to the recreation movement is questionable.

No one will deny the educational value of moving pictures. All of us will agree as to their capacity for amusement and entertainment. There seems to be, however, some division of opinion as to the recreative values to be derived from the average commercial program.

* For more detailed information write *Field and Stream*, Motion Picture Department, 578 Madison Avenue, New York City.

It seems a shame that each afternoon almost the year round there is a line-up of children in front of every moving picture theatre in the country following the dismissal of school. How much better it would be for these children to play in the great out-of-doors, developing lung capacity and strong heart action. No amount of thrilling can ever take the place of care-free running, leaping, shouting, and other forms of quick action. It is decidedly unnatural for children to remain sitting or standing still for long periods at a time. Health and growth are developed by play, and play means action.

Play develops character. Character does not just happen, but is the result of careful cultivation. A body as nearly sound as possible is the first and best approach to a sound mind, and a sound mind is the most fertile field for the cultivation of character. Therefore, let us not confuse the terms amusement and entertainment, with recreation. Let us be sure of providing the boys and girls an opportunity for creating, for developing hobbies, when they are in a receptive mood, to be followed up and enjoyed through to middle and advanced age.

Any person who claims that the spectators watching an athletic contest get the same muscular activity as the participants, or that the thrill of a western movie drama produces in the city child all the thrill enjoyed by the country boy in playing Run, Sheep, Run, not only is insulting the intelligence but is entirely lacking in the knowledge of the fundamentals of his psychology.

Motion pictures have been of great help in many ways to public recreation, and it is impossible to prophesy what the future may hold for both of these fast moving and rapidly developing agencies in our community life.

It is a disquieting fact in modern life that very few of the men and women who carry the burden of the world's work find a compensating joy in that work. They turn to recreation and amusements to satisfy that fundamental human appetite.

The machine has made it possible for the masses to enjoy leisure. Production in the future will create more and more leisure. It behooves us of this day and generation to think seriously, not only of the earned leisure of today, but the greatly increased leisure of tomorrow.

Will it be used for the benefit of mankind and the advancement of civilization, or will it result in more unhappiness and the degradation of the world? Leisure offers a great challenge to every agency contributing in any way to the educational and recreational fields of today and tomorrow. The motion picture is and will continue to play one of the leading roles.

IT is an interesting but pretty debatable subject—that of motion picture theatre attendance according to age classifications. Many conflicting reports, particularly as to children's attendance, are continually being quoted. A recent report based upon data gathered from many sources has appeared in the Motion Picture Herald. It was compiled by Campbell MacCulloch, engineer and economist of long experience and is as follows:

Age	U. S. Population	% of Population	Est. Daily M.P. Attend.	% of Age Group
- 5	13,887,000	10.9	100,000	1.6
5-14	26,446,000	20.8	665,000	10.5
15-24	22,448,000	17.7	1,982,000	30.9
25-44	37,533,000	29.6	2,744,000	42.9
45-64	20,436,000	16.2	750,000	10.8
65-	6,000,000	4.7	150,000	2.3
Total	126,750,000		6,400,000	

Daily motion picture attendance: 5% of population.

A bookmark prepared by the Cleveland Public Library in conjunction with the local Warner Theatres for the picture *So Big* listed the following books under the heading:

YOUR SON AND MINE

Hints for Parents

ABBOTT—The Boy Today

FURFEY—The Growing Boy

McGOVERN—Your Son and Mine

O'NEIL—The Problem Called the Modern Boy

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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À Nous, la Liberté

Written and directed by René Clair, music by Georges Auric, photographed by Georges Permal, produced by Films Sonores Tobis, distributed by Harold Auten.

The Cast

Emile	Henri Marchand
Louis	Raymond Cordy
Jeanne	Rolla France
The Uncle	Paul Olivier
Paul	Jacques Shelly
The Foreman	André Micaud
Maud	Germaine Aussey
An Old Man	Leon Lorin
An Old Convict	William Burke
An Orator	Vincent Hyspa

RENÉ CLAIR is one of the infinitely small number of motion picture directors who wasn't thrown out of his stride by the coming of talkies. He made silent comedies that were not only comic but individual—when he added sound to his films he simply added sound to what he had been doing before, instead of being stampered into photographing groups of actors talking—as most directors were—and having to find his way back to his old path of true cinema by a long and slow process of finding how little sound as mere noise and chatter adds to a motion picture.

Clair, besides having a wit and intelligence that we are in the habit of calling typically French, has also, combined with his individuality as a director, a per-

sonal and individual way of looking at life. This was all shown brilliantly in his silent films, but most of those reached only a limited audience in America, even that comic masterpiece, *The Horse Ate the Hat*, which is still fortunately available for groups interested enough in masterpieces to try to get hold of it. *À Nous, la Liberté* is the third of his sound films, following those two earlier delights, *Sous les Toits de Paris* and *Le Million*, and definitely nailing the fact, if it needed nailing, that M. Clair is one of the foremost comedy directors in the world of cinema.

The new film, as the title suggests, is a gay piece of nonsensical satire (but how barbed with sense!) held together by a certain conception of freedom. A song runs all through the picture—"life is beautiful when you know freedom"—"why need to complicate life with money when you can follow your fancy—life is sweet; let's live as the flowers live"—"the earth is round,

sweethearts on every side: when we see the end of the world it's time enough to stop. Everywhere you can laugh and sing, everywhere love and drink—Liberty for us!" The freedom of vagabondage.

Two pals are the heroes of this picaresque comedy, in prison at first for we know not what offense, in the routine of convict labor, lockstep, community feed-

BULLETIN

1932

Exceptional

À Nous la Liberté
The Battle of Gallipoli
Road to Life

Honorable Mention

Der Andere
Arrowsmith
As You Desire Me
Bring 'Em Back Alive
Broken Lullaby
Elisabeth von Oesterreich
Golden Mountains
Grand Hotel
Der Raub der Mona Lisa
Zwei Menschen



The two pals back to the road again in "À Nous, la Liberté"

ing and bars, gaily plotting for freedom. They try to escape—Louis succeeds and Emile fails. Louis rises in the world—definitely the rungs of his ladder are suggested, till by ingenuity and craft and not too severe a conscience he is the head of a colossal factory, where phonographs are made, rich and powerful. Eventually Emile is out of prison too, basking sentimentally in the loveliness of nature when gendarmes arrest him for being a vagabond. In jail again, an attempt to hang himself when he catches a glimpse of a girl without whom life seems unbearable unexpectedly results in his escape, and the accidents of his flight bring him into Louis' factory. He doesn't want to go to work, but another glimpse of Jeanne—who works there—makes him enroll among the employees.

Soon the erstwhile pals bump into each other and recognize each other. The old happy-go-lucky ties between them take hold again—the "Liberty!" slogan begins to sing itself once more. The factory—elaborately, grandiosely—is a Fordized replica of the prison, and they are prisoners in it, Louis held by his job of director, Emile by the romantic feeling he has for Jeanne. But there are forces working for their escape: Jeanne really loves a comrade-worker and cannot be moved to take Emile even by her uncle's ambitious desire to have her mate with the friend of the rich and powerful director; and some old jail-birds who recognize Louis come along to blackmail him out of his wealthy security. Louis' inventiveness at last achieves its goal and creates a machine that will manufacture itself, leaving the workers to enjoy themselves and the profits without lifting a finger. Together—Emile disillusioned about romance and free from it, Louis free from his industrial overlordship—they take to the road again, tramps, singing.

This merry fable is strung along a series of comic situations and happenings, in which some highly comic characters figure. As farce, if one thinks of no other aspect of it, it is enormously entertaining. Through

the texture of the amusing action, however, there are various threads of satire: satire of the respectable, complacent, self-seeking middle-class mind, kowtowing to wealth, not honest and not sincere; satire of mass production and the machine age, where individuals are only cogs; of communistic living, with its leveling of everyone down to a low common denominator; of mushy romantic sentimentality, and self-conscious nature-loving, and phoney art.

All the elements of the film are excellent in their place: the actors, the sets, the camera and microphone, the extraordinarily suitable musical score; but they are all pre-eminently tools to the director's hand. A René Clair picture is always a René Clair creation, in which his own personality and his own mind are predominant even over such able and individual actors as he invariably uses. *À Nous, la Liberté* couldn't possibly have been made by any other director in the world.—J. S. H.

As You Desire Me

From the play by Luigi Pirandello, directed by George Fitzmaurice, photographed by William Daniels, produced and distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The cast

Zara	Greta Garbo
Bruno	Melvyn Douglas
Salter	Erich von Stroheim
Tony	Owen Moore

IT becomes clearer and clearer that the distinction should be made between the play in motion pictures and the motion picture before a viewpoint can be reached from which to formulate appreciation of present day screen values. As a matter of fact most films today that the reviewer is called to comment upon, belong to the former order. That these should assume importance largely in ratio to the proportion of cinematic treatment that they evince is thought by many to represent a proper criterion or scale of judgment. But if one accepts as a general standard of classification

the distinctions made above, then it appears two aesthetics may be employed, that of judging screen fare as photographed material such as the stage may present, and largely in the manner in which it is there presented, and that of judging it as content selected and formed for cinematic needs and then expressed in cinematic pattern. Thus cinema as a creative art and the screen as a medium of reproduction are set apart.

Miss Garbo's most recent film, *As You Desire Me*, made from Luigi Pirandello's play of that name, is primarily the art of the theatre transferred by sound and pictures to the screen. Only here and there is it touched by the art of the cinema. It is essentially as a photographed play that it must be critically approached. As a photographed play *As You Desire Me* is manifestly a most superior film. It preserves to a degree too seldom preserved in the average picture made from play or book, the plot of the original and the intention of the author. It is a film of integrity and meaning. It raises a question in the mind such as Pirandello meant to be raised, though more fuzzily than he raised it in his play and with some compromise. It is managed with a view to giving both circumstance and characters reality. It is photographed often very beautifully, and the dialogue sound-recorded reproduces in large measure, since much of it is carried over directly from the play, a quality of dramatic language and intellectual tone missing from most talking films.

Many will remember *As You Desire Me* as Miss Garbo's most moving and important picture. Certainly her Maria is among her loveliest creations—and when has she not made her women lovely, distinct and memorable? Her presence lies upon this film like lustre. All light is drawn to her, the other characters fade into the background like shadows, and the life of the piece flows into her for breath. No other artist of the screen in serious portrayal has been able so to absorb attention, to blot out surrounding characters, no matter how well played, to triumph over sometimes inferior and shoddy

stage material and indifferent direction. Bernhardt and Duse could, and did, and often in the face of the same handicaps of vehicle, do the same. It is with Bernhardt and Duse that Garbo belongs. She will be among the few of the screen to achieve immortality through the remembrance of her audience, through what those who have seen her will tell others. If her Maria of *As You Desire Me* should by any chance be the last chapter of her legend, the legend will be glowing to the end, you may be sure.

Others of the cast deserve mention. Erich von Stroheim, in one of the most unpleasant and convincing characters ever to be unfolded in motion pictures, adds new distinction to his talents as a first-rate actor. Melvyn Douglas as Bruno, the husband of the lost, and perhaps recovered Maria, is just passable, but Owen Moore, as the artist who has painted the young Maria and believes he has found her long afterwards, is forthright and believable, playing with no fuss, content to take his place in the shadow of the golden presence.

Altogether an admirable and distinguished Greta Garbo film, carefully directed by George Fitzmaurice.—W.A.B.

Bring 'Em Back Alive

RKO-Van Beuren production of the Frank Buck-Malayan Expedition, directed by Clyde E. Elliott, photographed by Carl Berger and Nickolas Cavaliere, distributed by RKO-Radio.

THE screen has given us many portrayals of animal life in Africa and other portions of the globe where rare, curious and spectacular game abide. Some of these films, like *Trader Horn* and *Tarzan the Ape Man* are frankly and legitimately fairy stories making no pretense at giving zoological and scientific facts. One or two like *Ingagi* are completely spurious because they pretended to be true photographic records of expeditionary efforts photographed by scientific explorers, whereas the real purpose was to trick the public. Still others like *Rango*, while manufactured in the studio



Mr. Buck brought him back alive

of the jungle with a slight plot, are true representations of jungle life because every effort was made to set down accurately on the screen what could, and under certain conditions would, happen in the life of animals—their nature and habits together with the character and customs of native people were faithfully presented. A few other films, like some of Martin Johnson's, Dr. Lumann's and Lady McKenzie's, gain their authenticity through presenting only what actually has occurred before the camera.

Mr. Frank Buck's film (although Mr. Clyde E. Elliott is credited as the director) gains distinction by being somewhat different. Mr. Buck, long noted as a trapper of birds and animals for zoos, circuses, menageries and private collections, has sought to recreate jungle life by staging his drama

with the animals he has captured, or in the process of their being captured, during an excursion for the purpose on the Malay peninsula.

Bring 'Em Back Alive is one of the most interesting films of Asiatic, or any other kind of game life ever assembled. It gives a fearsome picture of the tiger as the bully of the jungle whose existence is one gay round of destruction. In Mr. Buck's film we see the tiger taking on with apparent glee such jungle neighbors as the black leopard, crocodile, water buffalo and python. The tiger and python sequence is one of the most fascinating ever shown. We see how Mr. Buck takes these animals alive in his ingenious traps, how he transfers them from the traps to their carrying cages. We see such animals as a baby elephant and a honey bear caught by hand and a young orang-outang being captured out of the top of a tree by cutting the tree

down. We see how these less dangerous animals, under Mr. Buck's kindly handling, adapt themselves to the environment of captivity, apparently with satisfaction at having escaped from the jungle and the beasts that prey upon them. All through the film, both in Mr. Buck's synchronized comments and the shots showing him and the animals together, runs the evidence of his undoubted love for the jungle inhabitants.

The film is beautifully, clearly and authentically photographed and takes a preeminent position among films of its kind. It should be seen by all who enjoy pictures of big game life and who love animals.

—W. A. B.

Facts Are Necessary

IS there not likelihood of putting blame for those things which annoy or distress upon the most handy excuse without regard to fact? An editorial which appeared in the June issue of *The Rotarian* well expresses this thought in a defense of the motion picture as an excuse. It reads:

"One of the most common errors of critics is that, wish-thinking, they leap from scanty facts to the very conclusions with which they started. . . . Always, it seems, men must have scapegoats. Perhaps it is to avoid the disquieting possibility of themselves being blamed for unsavory conditions. Literary historians recall that Daniel Defoe was bitterly upbraided for contributing to the delinquency of youth. Certain reformers, overlooking their measure of responsibility for the evils of the day, clucked knowingly when six children about to be hanged on Tyburn Hill for thievery declared they had gone wrong because of reading Defoe's 'Moll Flanders.' Only yesterday thunderous censure fell on dime novels for leading boys into the paths of wickedness.

"Today the target is the press and the motion picture. It has become fashionable to blame on them the sins of our generation. The stock market crash? The press gave out falsely optimistic information? The gang menace? Newspapers and movies made a hero of the gangster. . . . And so the bill of indictment runs. Perhaps some newspapers did print incorrect information about economic conditions but is the press more to blame than the institutions which supplies the stuff? Maybe some newspapers and certain films have made Robin Hoods out of gangsters, but isn't it an indubitable fact that public opinion aroused by a steady rain of publicity put arch-ganster Alphonse Capone behind the bars?

"It would be foolish to suppose that newspapers and motion pictures are per se sacrosanct and proper. It is equally erroneous to tar with the same brush of censure all news-

papers and all films. Furthermore, it is unfair to the thousands of conscientious men and women who are endeavoring to realize for the press and the theatre their proper places in an improving social order. Before indulging in the cheap luxury of criticism of others, perhaps we should ask ourselves a few questions. Have we contributed in any way to the condition of which we would complain? We know the newspaperman and the theatre man must draw their livelihoods from their business, but have we subscribed for the constructive paper? Do we always patronize the show that is above reproach?"

TALKING motion pictures will make the new educational plan of the University of Chicago generally available this autumn to all interested institutions and groups in the country it was recently announced at the University. This development in the use of educational talking pictures will be achieved through the combined efforts of the University and the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, through various of its subsidiaries. Erpi Picture Consultants, Inc., a research group composed of specialists in the various fields of science and scholarship, which for the past four years has been conducting a comprehensive study of the production and use of talking pictures in education, will provide the expert knowledge essential to the program.

This constitutes the first effort to combine regular class room material and the talking motion picture medium on a large scale. All the pictures produced at the University will be integrated with actual courses and the entire series used in its work, but they will be so arranged that other educational institutions and organizations will be able to use them either in whole or in part.

Through this means, the University will be able to offer educational institutions from high schools to the universities essential elements of its new plan, and the services of its leading teachers and research men.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

MANY activities of Better Films Committees slacken during the summer months when people are vacationing and children are away at play but still some things must and do go on and most importantly *plans*. If next year's season of junior matinees is to be a success work must be done now, especially if the programs are built along the thematic idea. That is if the matinee programs are regularly arranged around some central subject or theme, in keeping with the day, research, study and advanced plans are by all means advisable. Undoubtedly no one would emphasize this more strongly than Mrs. Piercy Chestney, president of the Macon (Ga.) Better Films Committee, who is certainly a successful pioneer in the use of such programs and knows the work they entail, and in order to help with such plans we are pleased to pass on outlines of some of her past programs which have been sent to us and are full of helpful suggestions.

SEPTEMBER

Labor Day, LaFayette-Marne Day (Sept. 6), First Continental Congress (Sept. 5, 1774)

1. Organ prelude—French and American airs
2. Novelty reel—Labor Day
3. Prologue — tableau "America Pays Tribute to LaFayette"
4. Presentation of the flag of the American Colonies in 1774

Bird Day Celebration

1. Display of bird houses in lobby of theatre and awarding prizes for same
2. Organ prelude—popular airs
3. Short subject—*National Bird Refugees* (U. S. Dept. of Agriculture)
4. Short subject—*Birds of a Feather* (Columbia cartoon)

Constitution Day (Sept. 17), "Star Spangled Banner" Written (Sept. 14, 1814)

1. Organ prelude—popular airs
2. Prologue—A Ritual of Our Flags (presents flags of America from 1497 to 1931)
3. Feature — *Declaration of Independence*—Chronicles of America Series

OCTOBER

Birthday of George Westinghouse (Oct. 6) and Jenny Lind (Oct. 6)

1. Organ prelude—popular airs
2. Short subject—courtesy Westinghouse Electric Company
3. Prologue—Presentation of Swedish flag by little girl dressed in costume of the time of Jenny Lind while organ plays "Last Rose of Summer"
4. Community singing
5. Souvenirs—courtesy Electric Company

Columbus Discovers America (Oct. 12, 1492)

1. Organ prelude—Spanish and Italian airs
2. Prologue — An Italian-Spanish Pageant—(a)—Statue Columbus against background of Italian flags and to music of Garibaldi's "Hymn"
(b)—Tableau Spanish flags; music—"Royal March of Spain"
(c)—Spanish dance
3. Community singing—"America"
4. Souvenirs—small Spanish flags

Surrender of Cornwallis (Oct. 19, 1781)

1. Organ prelude—patriotic airs
2. Feature — *Yorktown*—Chronicles of America Series
3. Community singing—"Yankee Doodle," "America the Beautiful"

Navy Day (Oct. 27), Birthday of Liszt (Oct. 22, 1811)

1. Organ prelude—selections from works of Liszt
2. Short subject—*Queen of the Waves* (courtesy of General Electric)

NOVEMBER

Birthday of Sousa (Nov. 6, 1854), Armistice Day (Nov. 11, 1918)

1. Organ prelude—Sousa Marches
2. Stage show—"The Blue and the Gray" (a soldier of the North and a soldier of the South carry on the stage their flags to the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "Dixie," followed by a U. S. soldier with the Stars and Stripes. Organ plays the national anthem and audience recites the pledge to the flag)
3. Short subject—*Armistice Day*
4. Prologue—The Flags of the Allies
5. Chaperons—wives of veterans

Father and Son Week (Second week in November)

1. Organ prelude—popular airs
2. Community singing—"A Toast to Our Daddies"
3. Feature—*Father's Son*
4. Every father and son attending together admitted free

JANUARY

Jacob Grimm's Birthday (Jan. 4, 1785)

1. Feature picture—one of the Grimm fairy tales
2. Prologue—fairy tableau by one of the schools
3. Attendance prize—copy of Grimm's Fairy Tales
4. Chaperons—Kindergarten teachers

Alexander Hamilton's Birthday (Jan. 11)

1. Short subject—*Alexander Hamilton*
2. Chaperons—Colonial Dames

Independence of Cuba (1900) and Robert Burns' Birthday (Jan. 25, 1759)

1. Organ overture—Medley of Scotch airs
2. Prologue—Scotch dance
3. Attendance prize—copy of Burns' poems

4. Theatre decorated with Cuban flags. Cuban anthem played
5. Souvenirs—small Cuban flags.

FEBRUARY

Washington's Birthday (Feb. 22, 1732) and James Russell Lowell's Birthday (1819)

1. Short subjects — *Washington* and *James Russell Lowell*
2. Prologue—Washington pageant by one of the schools
3. Ushers—children in colonial costume.
4. *Salute to the Flag*—D. A. R. trailer

MARCH

Andrew Jackson's Birthday and Julius Caesar assassinated (March 15)

1. Prologue—Tableau of Caesar's assassination
2. Chaperons—D. A. R.
3. Attendance prize—child's chair of old hickory

Rosa Bonheur's Birthday (Mar. 22, 1822)

1. Short subject pertaining to art
2. Attendance prize—Copy of a Bonheur picture.

APRIL

Establishment of U. S. Mint (April 2, 1792) and Birthday of De Koven (April 3)

1. Organ prelude—selections from "Robin Hood."
2. Prologue—song and dance numbers
3. Attendance prize—savings account donated by a bank

Pocahontas Weds John Rolfe (April 5, 1612) and Birthday of Houdini (April 6)

1. Organ prelude—Indian melodies
2. Tableau of the wedding by a group of school children
3. Prologue—tricks of magic by local Houdini
4. *Jamestown*—Chronicles of America Series

Garden Week, Be Kind to Animals Week, American Forest Week

1. Organ prelude—popular airs

2. *Dogs is Dogs*—Our Gang comedy
3. Novelty—tree planting
4. Prologue—Pet Show (children may enter any kind of pet—prizes for most popular in each class)
5. Feature—*The Bell of Atri* (dramatization of Longfellow's poem of an old horse that pleaded his own case)

MAY

George Washington's Inauguration (April 30, 1789), Boys' Week (April 30-May 7), May Day and Child Health Day (May 1)

1. Organ prelude—"Hail the Chief" (played at the first inauguration)
2. Short subject—*Confessions of a Cold*
3. Community singing—"Father of the Land We Love," written by George M. Cohan to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Washington's birth
4. Prologue—"Why Washington Did Not Become a Sailor" by school class
5. Feature—*Touchdown*
6. Prizes for the best list of Famous Boys of History, giving names and brief statement. (Ex.—Alexander the Great, led armies of Greece at 20)

JUNE

Flag Day Matinee (June 14)

1. Organ prelude—patriotic airs
2. Short subject—*Salute to the Flag* (D. A. R. trailer)
3. Feature—*Gateway to the West*—Chronicles of America Series
4. Community Singing—"America, the Beautiful"
5. Tableau—Flags of the United States
6. Pledge to the Flag

Daniel Carter Beard's Birthday (June 21)

1. Organ prelude—Scout songs
2. Feature—*Scouting with Dan Beard*
3. Feature—*Leaders in the Making*
4. Demonstration of Scout Work by members of a Scout troop

JULY

Independence Day Matinee (July 4)

1. Organ prelude—patriotic airs

2. Feature—*Declaration of Independence*—Chronicles of American Series
 3. Community singing—"America"
- Stephen Foster's Birthday (July 12)

1. Organ prelude—songs written by Foster
2. Community singing—songs written by Foster—"Old Black Joe," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Old Folks at Home"
3. Feature—*Santa Fe Trail*

AUGUST

President Hoover's Birthday (Aug. 10, 1874) Matinee

1. Community singing—"America"
2. Prologue—presentation of U. S. flag
3. Message to Hoover

Sir Walter Scott's Birthday (Aug. 15, 1771), Panama Canal opened to Commerce (Aug. 15, 1914)

1. Prologue—Scotch dance
2. Presentation of the flags of the United States and the Central American countries
3. Community singing—"Annie Laurie" and "Auld Lang Syne"

AN editorial appearing in a local daily in a community where there is a recently formed Better Films Council contained an admonition which perhaps might well be brought home to many, both groups and individuals, causing them to ask are we patronizing not just talking better pictures? It says:

"A local movie house recently featured one of the finest films of the year. The picture had been highly praised by educators and churchmen, and represented the best work of Hollywood scenario writers, actors and technicians. The theatre manager expected that the picture would attract unusual crowds; he therefore arranged to feature it for a full week.

"The theatre manager was decidedly disappointed. The picture did not bring him nearly as many patrons as he had obtained with films far inferior. The manager has

(Continued on page 19)

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

EDITOR

JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

DEPARTMENT STAFF

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FRANCES C. BARRETT

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIED INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

ALMOST MARRIED—From the novel "The Devil's Triangle" by Andrew Soutar, directed by William Menzies and Marcel Varnel, with a cast including Violet Heming, Ralph Bellamy and Alexander Kirkland. Fox, 5 reels. Drama of a girl who flees from her maniacal husband and after five years, when she does not hear anything of him, remarries. The maniac escapes from the institution and threatens his wife and her husband but in a struggle is killed. The story is interesting and the acting of Alexander Kirkland as the maniac is excellent. *Mature audience.*

BACHELOR'S FOLLY—From the play by Edgar Wallace, directed by T. Hayes Hunter, with a cast including Herbert Marshall and Edna Best. World Wide, 7 reels. An English production, slow moving but interesting. In a story of the race track a discontented wife and her unmarried sister are both after the same young bachelor, the former for ulterior purposes, the latter because she loves him. Adversity shows the man what kind of woman he is really dealing with and the unmarried sister triumphs. *Mature audience.*

CALIENTE (also The Information Kid)—Screen story and direction by George Beaumont, with a cast including Tom Brown and Maureen O'Sullivan. Universal, 7 reels. A crooked jockey reforms because of the faith of a small waif he adopts and a girl who loves him. Youngsters would enjoy the picture for the comedy element, the horse race and the important part played by the small boy. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

***CONGRESS DANCES**—Story by Norbert Falk and Robert Liebmann, directed by Eric

Charell, with a cast headed by Lilian Harvey and Conrad Veidt. United Artists, 7 reels. A gorgeously produced musical romance of the intrigues of the Congress of Vienna in 1814 at which the crowned heads of Europe gathered to decide the fate of Napoleon. The cute Lilian Harvey is used as a bait to keep the Czar from opposing Metternich's schemes. Conrad Veidt is excellent as the Austrian prime minister. *Mature audience.*

FORGOTTEN COMMANDMENTS — Screen story by James Fagan and Agnes Leahy, directed by Louis Gasnier and William Schorr, with a cast including Sari Maritza and Gene Raymond. Paramount, 7 reels. Story of the new Russian regime well-acted and directed. A young married couple come to the city to learn medicine and nursing where they find life very different from their quiet existence in the country. After they are unhappily separated they find themselves anew. There is an episode of deMille's spectacular silent drama *The 10 Commandments* but the rest of the picture is simple and highly entertaining. *Family audience.*

FRA DIAVOLO (Brother Devil)—From the operetta by A. E. Scribe, directed by Mario Bonard, with a cast including Tino Pattiera and Madeline Breville. Transcontinental, 8 reels. A charming old operetta picturesquely screened with an excellent tenor in the leading role. The dialogue is all in Italian. *Family audience.*

HAPPY ENDING—Screen story by Ian Hay, directed by Millard Webb, with a cast including Benita Hume and George Barrand. Monogram, 6 reels. An English production. At the crisis of their domestic troubles a man and a woman are parted during a shipwreck. Giving birth to her daughter, the woman brings her up to believe her father drowned. When the daughter is grown the father returns but the wife refuses to take him back, desiring to carry on alone. The action is slow but the production on the whole is entertaining. *Mature audience.*

HONOR OF THE PRESS—Screen story by M. L. Simon and J. K. Foster, directed by Breezy Eason, with a cast headed by Edward J. Nugent. Mayfair, 6 reels. Good newspaper story

with lots of excitement and humor. A cub reporter finally gets the clue to a notorious diamond gang and makes a startling revelation as to the leader. *Family audience.*

HUDDLE—Screen story by Francis Wallace, directed by Sam Wood, with a cast including Ramon Novarro and Madge Evans, *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 11 reels. The college career of the son of an Italian immigrant—he goes to Yale, becomes a star football player with the usual ups and downs of a college story. Good entertainment. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

IL EST CHARMANT (He Is Charming)—Screen story by Albert Willimetz, directed by Leon Mercanton, with a cast headed by Henry Garat. *Paramount*, 9 reels. A gay French comedy, with a great deal of attractive music, founded on "The Charm School," about a young law student who upsets all the old-fashioned traditions of a provincial town. Henry Garat, the hero, has qualifications for as great a popularity as Chevalier's. *Mature audience.*

LATIN LOVE—From the story "Greek Street" by Robert Stevenson, directed by Sinclair Hill, with a cast including William Freshman and Sari Maritza. *Mayfair*, 6 reels. A story of the Italian section of London told with naturalness and charm, making a very appealing film. A young English girl, singing in a little Italian restaurant, leaves to appear in a large cabaret but the enforced attentions of its owner drive her back to the little restaurant and the young Italian who loves her. *Family audience.*

MAN ABOUT TOWN—From the novel by Denison Clift, directed by John Francis Dillon, with a cast including Warner Baxter and Karen Morley. *Fox*, 7 reels. A story of intrigue, crime and detection in the diplomatic corps in Washington. The chief problem has to be met by a woman in deciding between letting one of her country's secrets be betrayed and getting involved in a murder. Interesting and well-acted. *Family audience.*

MERRILY WE GO TO HELL—From the novel "I Jerry Take Thee Joan" by Cleo Lucas, directed by Dorothy Arzner, with a cast including Sylvia Sydney and Fredric March. *Paramount*, 9 reels. Story of a wealthy girl who marries a newspaperman against her father's wishes. She finally leaves him when he renews a friendship with an actress. Losing her he realizes how much he loves her and returns in time to save her life. The picture is rather long but does hold the interest. *Mature audience.*

THE MIDNIGHT LADY—Screen story by Edward T. Lowe, directed by Richard Thorpe, with a cast including Sarah Padden, Claudia Dell and John Darrow. *Chesterfield*, 7 reels. Story in which a vanished mother saves her unknowing daughter from being falsely accused of murder. There are speakeasies and bits of "high life" in it, but it avoids glar-

ing extravagances and exaggerations quite neatly. Sarah Padden as the unrecognized mother is very good. *Mature audience.*

NEW MORALS FOR OLD—From the play "After All" by John Van Druten, directed by Charles Brabin, with a cast including Lewis Stone, Margaret Perry, Robert Young. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 8 reels. A story of strife between the older and younger generations. Unable to cope with the modern ideas of her children, a mother is forced to finally give them up. Later the children return to the home of their childhood. The production is well-directed and the story absorbing. *Mature audience.*

THE NIGHT RIDER—From the story by Harry P. Crist, directed by Fred Newmayer, with a cast headed by Harry Carey. *Artclass*, 6 reels. The usual kind of Western plot—a mysterious robber, an unknown who might or might not be he, and a grand clean-up in the end. The director's way of handling it gives it life and humor. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

NO GREATER LOVE—From the story by I. Bernstein, directed by Lewis Seiler, with a cast including Alexander Carr, Betty Graham and Dickie Moore. *Columbia*, 6 reels. A sentimental and tearful story of a delicatessen proprietor—Jewish—who adopts a little lame girl—Catholic—and the trials he has getting her lameness cured and keeping her out of a charity institution. Unusually good for those who like this type of picture. *Family audience.*

POTIPHAR'S WIFE (Also Her Strange Desire)—From the story by Edgar Middleton, directed by Maurice Elvey, with a cast including Nora Swinburne and Laurence Olivier. *Powers*, 6 reels. A smart English comedy of a lonely ladyship trying to play a love-game with her attractive chauffeur who will not play. Leisurely in action, well acted and cleverly directed. *Mature audience.*

RADIO PATROL—From the story by Tom Rand, directed by Edmund L. Cahn, with a cast including Robert Armstrong and Lila Lee. *Universal*, 7 reels. An interesting story well-handled of the police force in a large city, giving the human side and showing the dangers they run and their temptations. There is a slight plot of two pals on the force who love the same girl and how their friendship remains through everything. *Family audience.*

RESERVED FOR LADIES—From the story by Ernest Vajda, directed by Alexander Korda, with a cast headed by Leslie Howard. *Paramount*, 8 reels. A delightfully sophisticated picture, well-directed and excellently acted, made in England. The story deals with the head-waiter of a large London restaurant who is mistaken for a prince and much loved by a beautiful girl. His case is hopeless until the girl's father warns him that faint heart ne'er won fair lady. *Mature audience.*

THE RICH ARE ALWAYS WITH US—From the novel by E. Pettit, directed by Alfred E. Green, with a cast headed by Ruth Chatterton.

First National, 7 reels. Sophisticated picture of the marital troubles of a couple who have been married for several years. After the divorce the wife wants to marry a man whom she has loved a long time but different circumstances interfere. The picture holds one's interest. *Mature audience.*

RIDERS OF DEATH VALLEY—*From the story by Jack Cunningham, directed by Albert Rogell, with a cast headed by Tom Mix. Universal, 8 reels.* The owner of a ranch rides out into Death Valley with a girl and two men who are trying to steal her gold mine. With their supplies gone and their water low, the ranchman sends his trusty horse "Tony" back for help. Entertaining but highly improbable. *Family audience.*

SANTA LUCIA LUNTANA—*Screen story by O. Cammi, directed by Harold Godsoa, with an Italian cast. Cinema, 7 reels.* An Italian story full of sentiment about an immigrant family nearly ruined by jazz and American "wild life." Evidently made in America with some foreign scenic shots. Italian dialogue. *Family audience.*

SINNERS IN THE SUN—*From the story by Mildred Cram, directed by Alexander Hall, with a cast including Carole Lombard and Chester Morris. Paramount, 8 reels.* Story of a boy and girl who seek happiness through material things only to find that after all love is the important thing. The story is interesting and the production well-directed. *Mature audience.*

***THE SKIN GAME**—*From the play by John Galsworthy, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, with a cast including A. V. Grace, Helen Haye and John Longden. Powers, 8 reels.* Conflict in an old English town between the old aristocracy and the new industrially rich. Tense drama and human personalities, admirably written and directed—well equal to any stage production of the Galsworthy play. *Family audience.*

SOCIETY GIRL—*From the play by John Larkin, Jr., and Charles Beahan, directed by Sidney Lanfield, with a cast including Peggy Shannon, James Dunn and Spencer Tracy. Fox, 7 reels.* A story of a society girl who falls in love with a prizefighter. When her friends ridicule her she nearly wrecks his life but in the end love overcomes all other considerations. *Family audience.*

SOUTH SEA ADVENTURES—*Principal, 5 reels.* Zane Grey's adventures fishing in the South Seas, with some interesting photography of deep-sea fishing, accompanied by mild wisecracks from a lecturer. *Family audience.*

STATE'S ATTORNEY—*From the story by Louis Stevens, directed by George Archainbaud, with a cast headed by John Barrymore. RKO-Radio, 9 reels.* The story of a criminal lawyer who becomes state's attorney in his effort to reach the governorship. The story rambles and is weak in spots but the performance of Mr.

Barrymore compares favorably with some of his best acting. The picture will probably have a popular appeal. *Family audience.*

THE STRANGE CASE OF MOLLY LOUVAIN—*From the play "Tinsel Girl" by Maurine Watkins, directed by Michael Curtiz, with a cast including Ann Dvorak, Lee Tracy and Richard Cromwell. First National, 7 reels.* A holdup man, an idealistic student and a worldly newspaper reporter fall in love with a girl following in her mother's wayward footsteps. A shooting brings things to a head and the girl decides which one she loves. Fiction with a sensational tinge, and with agreeable and effective actors. *Mature audience.*

STREET OF WOMEN—*From the novel by Polan Banks, directed by Archie Mayo, with a cast including Kay Francis, Allan Dinehart and Roland Young. Warner, 5 reels.* A well-dressed and good mannered story of a heartless wife standing between her husband and his high-minded mistress, who sacrifices her happiness for two selfish and puritanical young people. Tastefully and rather heavily done. *Mature audience.*

***TERRA MADRE (Mother Earth)** — *Italian production, Transcontinental, 8 reels.* The best Italian picture that has come to us since the war—in production, acting, and all the technical sides comparable to the best cinema art anywhere. The story is intended to encourage the ideal of combining the best elements of old and modern Italy and is unusually human and interesting. The picture is recommended for schools and libraries for its educational values. *Family audience.*

THE TWO FISTED LAW—*Screen story by William Colt MacDonald, directed by D. Ross Lederman, with a cast headed by Tim McCoy. Columbia, 6 reels.* A rather leisurely Western, with the familiar plot of a villain doing the hero and heroine out of their ranches. Pleasantly acted with splendid riding. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

***TWO SECONDS**—*From the play by Lester Elliott, directed by Mervin LeRoy, with a cast headed by Edward G. Robinson. First National, 7 reels.* A sombrely exciting drama of a man's mind going to pieces and making him a murderer. A very interesting study in psychology, superbly acted by the star. (Also reviewed under "Critical Comment" in the May issue of the Magazine). *Mature audience.*

UNCLE MOSES—*Screen story by Sholom Asch, directed by Aubrey Scotto, with a cast including Maurice Schwartz and Judith Abarbanell. Yiddish Talking Pictures, 8 reels.* The story of a nouveau riche Jew, who married for a child, and a pretty girl who married him against her will. Remarkably good picture of certain phases of Jewish life in New York, very well-acted. The dialogue is all in Yiddish. *Family audience.*

***EIN WALTZER VOM STRAUSS (A Waltz by Strauss)**—*From the story by Paul Beyer,*

directed by Conrad Wiene, with a cast including Gustav Froelich, Hans Junkerman and Maria Paudler. *Capital*, 9 reels. A charming story based on the life of the young Viennese Waltz King and his rivalry with his famous father till he became even more famous. In setting, sentiment, acting and music, one of the most delightful of the German musical romances. Historically worth while. *Family audience.*

WHILE PARIS SLEEPS—*From the story by Basil Woon, directed by Allan Dwan, with a cast including Victor McLaglen, Helen Mack and William Bakewell. Fox, 6 reels.* Rather old-fashioned melodrama of how a girl was saved from dire underworld perils by a man who she did not know was her father. An excellent job of setting and photography with exciting action and some very good Parisian atmosphere. *Family audience.*

THE WOMAN DECIDES—*From the novel "Conflict" by Miles Malleon, directed by Miles Mander, with a cast including Owen Nares and Adrienne Ames. Powers, 7 reels.* An interesting drama of English political life in which the local candidates for the Tory and Labor parties become rivals also for a woman. It is serious but not heavy and well-done. *Mature audience.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

À Nous, la Liberté—9 rls.

Family audience.

As You Desire Me—7 rls.

Family audience.

Bring 'Em Back Alive—7 rls.

Family audience. Junior matinee.

SHORT SUBJECTS

BEDTIME STORY (Terrytoon Cartoon)—*Educational, 1 reel.* After the cat is put out for the night and its owner has gone to bed the mice come out for a frolic—very amusing. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BELIEVE IT OR NOT NOS. 9-10—*Vitaphone, 1 reel each.* Ripley shows and tells us of many strange things, such as—a statue that stands in the middle of Bronx River; a violin made from match sticks; et cetera. *Family audience.*

THE BULLY (Flip the Frog Cartoon)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1 reel.* Flip takes up prize-fighting. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

COME BACK TO ERIN (Fitzpatrick Traveltalks)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1 reel.* Charming scenes of Ireland and some good Irish songs. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

CURIOSITIES NO. 232—*Columbia, 1 reel.* The usual type of items for this series, more amusingly presented than usual. *Family audience.*

DEAR OLD LONDON—*Vitaphone, 1 reel.* Interesting views of the British capital. *Family audience.*

EMPIRE OF THE SUN (Vagabond Adventures Series)—*RKO-Pathe, 1 reel.* We are taken to the Orient to see the Japanese celebrate the Festival of the Flowers. *Family audience.*

THE GREEKS HAD A NAME FOR THEM (Brevities)—*Universal, 1 reel.* Old-timers in melodramas with a wise-cracking title man. *Family audience.*

I AIN'T GOT NOBODY (Bouncing Ball Cartoon)—*Paramount, 1 reel.* The Mills Brothers rendering this old favorite in their clever way, without the use of instruments. *Family audience.*

IN ABYSSINIA (Medbury's Travelaughts)—*Columbia, 1 reel.* An amusing travelogue of the Ethiopian country. *Family audience.*

JOINT WIPERS (Tom and Jerry Cartoon)—*RKO-Radio, 1 reel.* The friends as plumbers nearly wreck the town. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

LET ME CALL YOU SWEETHEART (Bouncing Ball Cartoon)—*Paramount, 1 reel.* Cartoon song number with the popular Ethel Merman singing the accompaniment. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

*MAN-EATING SHARKS (Cannibals of the Deep Series)—*Educational, 1 reel.* Unusually exciting conflicts with sharks. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

MICKY'S BIG BUSINESS—*RKO-Radio, 2 reels.* Mickey McGuire and his gang get the best of a rival gang in an athletic meet. *Family audience. Junior Matinee.*

MICKY'S GOLDEN RULE—*RKO-Radio, 2 reels.* Mickey and his gang go on a picnic but their rivals turn it into a ghost scare. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE OLD BULL—*Zasu Pitts, Thelma Todd, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels.* An amusing comedy in which Zasu Pitts tries to drive a car and succeeds in getting herself and her girl friend in many difficulties. A nice old lion joins in the fun. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

OVER THE SEAS TO BORNEO (Fitzpatrick Traveltalks)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1 reel.* Picturesque and informative travelogue. *Family audience.*

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 10—*Paramount, 1 reel.* Fishing for rainbow trout; footwear for all occasions; Rubinoff and his violin. *Family audience.*

PARIS GLIMPSES—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. Interesting scenes of Paris. *Family audience.*

PATHE REVIEW NO. 11—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. The beautiful cathedral at Chartres; hillbilly harmonies; cosmetics delight the natives of Labrador. *Family audience.*

POTS AND PANS (Tom and Jerry Cartoon)—*RKO-Radio*, 1 reel. The pals give a dinner with plenty of music and pep. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 9—*Columbia*, 1 reel. News from Hollywood about Eddie Cantor, Charles Bickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Joan Bennett and others. *Family audience.*

SCREEN SOUVENIRS NOS. 11-12—*Paramount*, 1 reel each. Down the ages—Queen Victoria; West Point cadets in 1905; Wilbur Wright in 1913; early screen lovers; bathing suits in 1905; a mystery drama of 1907; the gold rush of '98. *Family audience.*

SHANGHAI (Vagabond Adventures Series)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. An interesting adventure in the Orient. *Family audience.*

*SNOW BIRDS—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. Winter sports near Los Angeles—the use of slow motion and the stop camera is most interesting. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SPORTSLANTS NOS. 8-9—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel each. Ted Husing shows us various sports. *Family audience.*

SPRING ANTICS (Aesop Fable)—*RKO-Pathé*, 1 reel. The animals have a great time in the Spring. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 19—*Universal*, 1 reel. Strange happenings all over the world—testing the brains of rats; a young man who drives nails with his bare hands; et cetera. *Family audience.*

*SWING HIGH—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. The Codona trapeze artists—and certainly artists they are. A thrilling picture with different camera angles—looking from the ground up to the trapeze, from the peak of the tent looking down and from the sides as the artists swing into space. The use of slow motion is put to great advantage as the picture shows you much more of the grace and daring of these people than can be observed by the human eye at the regular performance. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THOSE BLUES (Bouncing Ball Cartoon)—*Paramount*, 1 reel. Lopez and his orchestra play "Those Blues." *Family audience.*

TUBA TOOTER (Tom and Jerry Cartoon)—*RKO-Radio*, 1 reel. The two pals join a German band. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

WHO! ME?—*Universal*, 2 reels. An amusing comedy of a youth on his honeymoon who becomes involved with a girl whose husband has

left her. He has a hard time posing as the husband of both girls. *Family audience.*

THE WINGED HORSE (Oswald Cartoon)—*Universal*, 1 reel. The Lucky Rabbit mounts the winged horse to rescue his girl who has been carried away on the magic carpet. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE WORLD DANCES — *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. Dances of many lands—hula hula dancers of Hawaii, geisha girls of Japan, the native dance of Cuba, the Island of Bali and the Highland fling, the negroes of the South—very interesting and instructive. *Family audience.*

YOO HOO—*James Gleason, Universal*, 2 reels. Comedy of a telephone linesman who adopts a small boy and has trouble when the father appears on the scene. The little boy is very good. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

(Continued from page 14)

not entirely lost faith, despite his disappointing experience. He proposes to make another effort to obtain patronage for the finer products of Hollywood.

"There is a lesson in this experience for the organizations . . . that devote themselves to the better films movement. It is not sufficient to criticize pictures that are in bad taste and tend to lower the standards of youthful movie fans. There must be a positive side to any program for better films.

"Those who seek to elevate the standards of the screen must find some way of expressing, in a tangible way, their appreciation of the better type of movie. Unless they can help the cooperating theatre managers to fill their houses with better films, they can not attain the utmost degree of effectiveness in their efforts against objectionable films."

ACCORDING to reports of the Czechoslovakia Ministry of Interior 77 pictures were released during a recent month for showing to children under 16 years of age. Of these 41 were cultural or educational subjects, 4 comedies and 32 dramas and other subjects. Thirty-four pictures, including 10 dramas, 11 comedies and 12 other subjects, were released for showing to adults only.

THE BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL
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The purposes of the Better Films Committees affiliated with the Better Films National Council are:

To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

The Better Films National Council as an aid in carrying out these purposes furnishes an information service through its various publications.

Please use the coupon below and write for the publications you yourself would like or would like to have sent to interested friends.

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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Vol. VII, No. 7



Sept.-Oct., 1932



The teacher and the pupil in "Mädchen in Uniform" (see page 9)

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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Your Attention Please!

THE first fall number of our Magazine comes to you as a combined September-October issue and we hope, coming at this time when winter addresses are again resumed and thoughts and interests are once more centered on indoor amusement and entertainment, that it will bring, as it reminds you of a new season of motion pictures, something in the way of suggestion and information for your particular activity. Included among our readers are members of community Motion Picture Councils, parents interested in being able to direct their children to suitable motion pictures, educators interested in the use of the motion picture as a teaching tool, ministers using motion pictures in specialized church work, exhibitors alert to all sources of public expression regarding the motion picture, students of the motion picture interested in its history, artistic and technical developments, those doing research in the field of motion pictures on such subjects as its effects and influences, those interested especially in the unusual picture and many just interested patrons of the theatre who want advance information so that they may make their movie hours count for the most in entertainment value by seeing the kind of pictures they like best.

It is our endeavor to try to offer to all of these readers subjects of interest. Through general articles giving stories of how the wheels go round in production and distribution of pictures, critical opinion of experienced screen writers and critics, specialized

uses of the motion picture from those carrying on such activity, et cetera. Further through motion picture reviews based upon Committee group opinion—longer reviews of the outstanding pictures in the Exceptional Photoplays Department, shorter reviews and audience ratings of the good entertainment pictures in the Selected Pictures Department. And further in the Better Films Forum, a clearing house of better films activity, by a reporting of community accomplishment in various localities so that profit may be derived from this interchange of experience.

But have we done it? That is for you readers to answer. If you will let us know of different or additional information which would be helpful to you we will do our best to insert it. If you want more of this or less of that, let us know. How can we best be more serviceable? We have asked ourselves these questions and now we pass them on to you. Ours is not a "fan" publication so we can not tell you of the latest Hollywood haircut or Beverly Hills home decoration. It is not a "trade" publication so we can not tell you of mergers, contracts and business. We are strangely general and specialized at the same time for we have a varied public but much of it with distinctive interests, therefore we wonder are we broad enough to please the former and defined enough to please the latter. So taking a cue from the radio we ask "What would you like on this magazine program?"

Vitalized Learning in Science

By MRS. MARGUERITE E. SCHWARZMAN

Mrs. Schwarzman at the last annual conference of the National Board of Review told, as given below, the story of her interesting project The Children's Laboratories, which she organized and of which she is the Director. In addition to this Directorship she is also an instructor in the Institute of Education of New York University.
—EDITOR'S NOTE.

TO put life—pep—into science is a challenge, particularly when the wealth of 20th century science shall be interpreted to a young child with its limited experience. Every bit of showmanship must be mustered, not so much because a teacher wishes to act the part of a showman—she often in modern education is rather a co-adventurer—but because with good showmanship new experience takes on new meaning—becomes vitalized.

Vitalized learning in science is for me not only a subject chosen for a speech—a passing interest—but a life task, second only to the routine of keeping a home going and raising a family of two boys. This life task came to me after I had watched as a concerned bystander the development of science training with young people over a period of many years. My young friends showed a remarkable disinterest in a subject which I had found to be most fascinating. How was this apathy to be explained? Careful and thoughtful analysis made me believe that to “take ‘em young” and build up a science interest wisely was worthy of trial. I experimented first on my own boy of seven and within a few months opened the first exhibit at the “Children's Laboratories” inviting public approval—or disapproval—from my many visitors both young and old.

The problem of vitalized learning is not unique to science therefore I beg to put before you a few ways in which I approached the task. I knew in the first place that a young child likes a good story and the story of science I felt could be made into a sort of running narrative. So I started with the beginning of things—the beginning of the earth—and continued with the forms of life

on the earth, how they developed as we find them now both in the field of botany and zoology. But I did not stop there. I wanted all these abstract conceptions to tie up very closely with the actual experiences of the child, so I included in my story of life, as I called it, the human being—the child himself. And I assiduously tried to make this a good story not merely by narrating but by supplying wide experiences—visual aids.

I took a little center and converted it into a laboratory where the children could feel the things and be perfectly free and at home. The materials I chose were just as striking as I could find them—or make them. I became an artist of a sort in trying to make my charts colorful and my models shapely. I wished my specimens to have meaning to the child. Their worth could not be measured in dollars and cents but as part of the exhibit story they had a real didactic value. My children came to me in small unit groups of 20 and were told: “Feel at home,” “Touch anything you want,” “Do whatever you please,” “This is your place.” And they quickly sensed the spirit of informality, starting to touch and feel and take up things and talk about them and discuss them with their fellows—because that is what I encouraged them to do—and all sorts of questions arose in their minds. “What is it?” “Why is it here?” “What does this all mean?” That was the launching of the expedition, if you wish, into this realm of the unknown for the child. Our first exhibit was an exhibit of the earth; the second, plants; and the third and fourth, animals; and the fifth was mankind himself. All of these exhibits together told the story of life, you see. In each of them I did just as much as I possibly could to stimulate the child to think. Labels dull the imagination and were omitted. I introduced just as many devices as I could find. And I found out that the motion picture and the lantern slide were remarkable aids. Always our ex-

pedition ended by having the children squat on the hearth rug to watch the movie. I found in showing the movie that as I talked with it the children asked questions. Many things which had not been clarified in the expedition, which lasted an hour, were untangled by means of the movie. The motion picture is without doubt one of my strongest allies.

As I was developing the project, I was asked to go into the schools to give my "life story" to assembly and classroom groups and as I went into the public schools of these suburban communities, I always carried my projector with me. We had pictures, whenever it was possible, to illustrate the particular point of the talk and discussion. I feel very strongly that the pictures **MUST** apply. If it is going to bring in some outside influence—be used as a "filler-in"—it is a waste of time and opportunity. It should hitch up definitely with the subject on hand.

So also I have used pictures to check up on what the children have assimilated in class. At one time in the early days of my work I found out that the children got insects and spiders jumbled up. (They are not similar, you know, in spite of superficial likenesses. Their living habits too are unlike.) What could I do to correct this misconception? I found a film of the spider and the next time I went to the schools I took precious time to project it. A check up after the showing proved to me that this film effectively conveyed the difference between the spider and the fly.

From this school project I was called upon to do more—and more—AND MORE. I did feel very strongly that teachers could be taught some of the tricks of the showman in the field of elementary science and as a result I soon was teaching teachers in the extension division of the School of Education of New York University. This is now one of my fascinating jobs. When I work with teachers I always have my projector and a film with me. I find the teacher hesitates to recognize science as a new subject for the elementary school. Can you blame

her? She is expected to know so much as it is. So I have tried to assist her by simplifying science and giving her help wherever possible. To supplement lectures, illustrated by charts, specimens and movies, I conceived the idea in the spring of 1931 of arranging an exhibit of some of the science aids available to the teacher. This is only one way in which we can give the harassed elementary school teacher the knowledge of techniques which shall make her job a better show job. She has to bring to this a sense of imagination, a keenness of perception, a desire to know and want to know more. I sincerely believe that a subject like science can be simplified for the teacher so that she may more readily see the possibilities of developing it. The motion picture should play a major part in this vitalizing of science.

I have indulged in reminiscences in the hope of arousing a feeling among you that the motion picture as an aid in vitalizing learning is urgent. I do not agree that probably the next generation—or the next—will have the advantage of the educational movie. I think it is up to us *now* to make these advantages more widely available. To this end I wish to offer three suggestions.

I was "green on the job" of motion pictures when I started my experiment and in investigating their possibilities, I saw bigger and better things ahead, particularly in the closer association of the motion picture industry and the schools. One of the principal things is to get this *question of projectors* settled in one way or other. There are on the market as you know many projectors, all good in their way. There is a sound 35 millimeter projector serving the school field in a way in which the 35 millimeter silent cannot. And last—but for the classroom by no means least—is the 16 millimeter silent projector which has a decided advantage not only because of its facility of manipulation but because the classroom teacher can interpret the film in terms of the group. Her children know her voice and manners of speech and she knows their

special weaknesses. She talks their language. With so much good equipment we should do some unbiased experimentation to determine the type of projector best fitted for various educational uses. Something should be done so that the school man will not look at this new thing as a big question mark. It would be to the advantage of the motion picture producers if the school men, parent-teacher associations and other agencies, which very often have money to spend on this sort of equipment, would know how best to spend it. I have been in schools where they have spent big money on a projector used twice a year. A new toy, but it was not practical for that particular school. It was sold by a good salesman. I would like to suggest that a good constructive survey be made of projectors to show where they would fit best into the school system and to what use they can be put in correlating with the school program. The school men would then know how to spend their moneys and the children would reap the profit—not only the salesman and his company.

Let us suppose that this ground work for the intelligent choice of an adequate projector were done, we would then be faced with a second problem—the teacher. Each teacher who is to use this projector, which is made available to her through an intelligent survey, should be instructed on how it is to be used. It is the easiest thing in the world to use one of these projectors. A single demonstration usually suffices. Many find it easy to operate even in the dark as you know. It does not require long technical training just to run a projector intelligently. (I do not of course refer here to a detailed study of its intricate mechanism for I do not consider such a knowledge a necessary part of the average teacher's equipment. Excellent servicing is everywhere available on short notice.) There are some school systems throughout the country where the teacher is required to learn how to use motion picture equipment. This is without doubt a move in the right direction.

I should like to add that not only teachers now in service but normal school incumbents should be taught how to use this very important tool in education.

I would like to suggest as my third point a directory of motion pictures for the educational field. I have worn out my shoes—seldom my patience—going up and down New York City streets trying to locate distributors that were mentioned in the newest “1001 Films,” which I believe is the best of its kind, and have found they had moved her or there—or had quite disappeared. Now there are quantities of films available, many are very excellent, but we do not know how to put our fingers on them. If we wish to have film material that immediately ties up with the subject under discussion in the school—and this, as I have previously stressed, is important—we must carefully organize what is on hand. How can the school teacher or the official himself, who has to handle so many jobs, take time to search through catalogs—and their number is legion—for appropriate teaching films. And even a careful catalog search often brings discouraging results for titles are most deceiving. The motion picture specialist and the educator might profitably get together and do something as the librarians have done. They have accumulated an index called the “Reader's Guide of Periodical Literature,” where even an untrained person can lay his finger on desired information in very short order. There is lots of material in the movie field and lots more is coming, I hope and sincerely believe, and we must know how to locate it. With a carefully organized list of every film available for school use and a monthly supplement—because changes in this field are rapid—a real service to education and the educational motion picture would be inaugurated. We want the best and the latest and we have a right to ask it. And what has been done for readers, let us do in a big way for the educators, because they want the motion picture and I am sure the motion picture wants the schools.

Do We Fancy Fact or Fiction?

Objections are so often voiced against the motion picture because it is not more true to life. But do we really want our cinema entertainment to portray the average life of the average man? Mr. Eric M. Knight, motion picture editor of the Philadelphia Public Ledger, believes not and a convincing why of this belief appeared in an issue of the New York State Exhibitor from which we are pleased to reprint.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

I am eternally tired of hearing the misbelief expressed that we want—or ever did want—stories of normal people doing normal things. In the first place, no one is interested in normality—if it were so, you could turn to the front page of this paper and read on our right-hand column: “John William Bibtucker, 42, bookkeeper in one of our larger department stores in town, went to the neighborhood movie theatre last night with his wife, Annie Bibtucker, 38, and his two children, Marcelle and John William, Jr. Mrs. Bibtucker wished to go down town to a first-run house, but Mr. Bibtucker declared he was too tired to make the trolley trip, inasmuch as he makes it twice daily for six days a week. On the way home Mr. Bibtucker bought the children ice cream cones at Wortenworther’s cigar, candy and news store on the corner, and then went home and read the evening paper for twenty minutes before he went to bed. And very tired he was, too, he declared, in a special interview granted to a representative of this paper.” Now that is normality and don’t quibble about it. Any one who thinks the world is all atwitter to hear about that is little short of weak-minded.

Without maligning the blessedness of normality for a moment, I call attention to the fact that our front page (which is yet unborn as I write this) without doubt, will deal with grave things abroad, troubles of State in Washington, veterans who won’t go home to normal lives, persons killed in automobile crashes, and people who shoot each other. You will read of whatever riots, fires, earthquakes, catastrophes, suicides, deaths, murders occur. Your front page is the drama of the day—and so always that front page is a catalogue of the abnormal.

Fiction and drama are very much the same. And if Hollywood is wise it will not be ashamed to stand on its program and refrain from depicting life as it is most of the time. For if it does it will play to empty houses.

If we go back in drama we have abnormality reflected so consistently that one searches in vain for a “nice person” in the sense of everyday standards. In Greek drama Lysistrata was a sex-meddling suffragette, and Clytemnestra a husband-slayer. Orestes killed his mother, Electra was a mad wench full of nothing but hate, while Oedipus would only be admitted into the very best circles of society these days. In fact, I can’t think of one character in Greek drama who would classify as exactly nice.

Turning to English playwriting, we find King Lear a maniac. Hamlet just as loony, and all the rest of the characters of note so busy stabbing, poisoning, assassinating, dying and tongue-lashing one another that there is not a one who would be allowed to live on a decent residential block in this city. Down through the Sheridan era more than half the characters in drama were unbalanced or weak-minded; into the new era of Ibsen we find half the people mad or going mad; in American drama Eugene O’Neill writes of prostitutes, braggarts, psychopathic cases and malicious murderers; Continental drama runs from murder or worse in its heavier moments to Chaucerian sex mix-ups in its merrier ones. As for Russian drama, its penchant for cataloguing all crime, misery and sin that is presentable is well known.

Turn where you will in serious drama the answer is the same. Cyrano was a bombastic braggart to be pitied, Hedda Gabler a morose subject for a nerve specialist, Hilda Wangel quite dippy, Mrs. Alving of “Ghosts” more than touched, and John Gabriel Bjorkmann just plain mad. Nina Leeds was a Freudian mess, Christine and Lavinia Mannon both dainty little murderers, Giovanni in “Paola and Francesca”

quite nutty, Smerdjikov Karamazov only worse than his brothers because he was an epileptic in the bargain, and neither Trigorin of the "Seagull," nor Uncle Vanya, a great deal better than the abnormal—or subnormal—Simon Legree.

Linda of "Holiday" was either mad or the sanest person ever presented on the stage; Captain Boyle and Juno of "The Paycock," both more than slightly cracked, no one in "Berkeley Square" could take a prize for sanity, while the elder Barrett, of Wimpole Street, had unmentionable foibles, Richard III was potty, Dr. Faustus quite insane, Gruysinskaya somewhat of a half-wit, Kringelein quite unbalanced and Volpone a liar, miser, cheat and profligate.

Weak-willed fools, braggarts, madmen, murderers, half-wits, poisoners and maniacs have ever been the center of drama. Fiction likewise dwells on the abnormal for its thesis—since our late war our hero nearly always is one with afflicted nervous system. As for opera, I will not again list the body slaughtering, dueling, torturing, murdering and thunderbolt-hurling that goes on through "Aida," "The Ring" and other popular musical offerings up to this date of "Wozzeck"—in which a madman spilled blood aplenty after various misbehaviors of a trollop of a wife.

Nor, looking back over our best films have I any reason to believe that depiction of normality has anything to do with success on the screen. In fact, I come to the conclusion that we again follow, without exception, the rule of depicting the abnormal. Dr. Caligari was raving mad and the whole film dealt with his madness. The best Russian films deal with cruelty, mob violence, murder and death—from *Potemkin* to *Storm Over Asia*.

Our best Hollywood films are no less studies of the abnormal. In *White Shadows in the South Seas*, the broken-down doctor is murdered in the finish by a bully pearl-trader; *Tabu's* priest calmly watches the native hero drown to death; *Cimarron's* hero, a wife-deserter and irresponsible

thrill-seeker, dies in filth in the oil fields; the hero of *Sunrise* spent half the film contemplating the murder of his wife by drowning; the best characters in *Outward Bound* were a drunkard and two youngsters who had committed suicide; the extremely beautiful von Sternberg films have yet to depict Marlene Dietrich as otherwise than what is politely known as a "fallen woman;" Charlie Chaplin ever depicts a tramp who does not work for a living as does a decent member of society; *The Guardsman* is entirely concerned with the suspected sex misdoings of the leading female character, and the famous Cagney-Robinson films were just one glorious welter of bootlegging, woman-punching and rubbing out.

The truth of the matter is that we are no more interested in the normal character than we are in the Einstein theory. When we go to the theatre we want to leave normality and realism behind us. We pay our admission, and in doing so we say in effect: "Now, go ahead and tell me a story. I have come from normality—I have just left a whole day of it which concerns itself with signing letters, earning salaries, paying the interest on the mortgage. Give me surcease!" And so the playwright, knowing what we want, takes us away from this world. He shows us a world in which people do outrageous and magnificent things, a world of daring deeds and bitter strife, a world in which men overcome terrific difficulties and women match force with wit and skill.

PROFESSOR FELIX GRAIFFE, Sorbonne lecturer and exchange professor of French drama at Columbia University, holds that censorship and lack of full and free criticism are preventing the development of the motion picture as a high form of art. The stupid part of this censorship is that it brands as salacious the presentation of social and psychological problems which in actuality would not be enjoyed by people with evil minds. Hence the development of the drama is stunted.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Mädchen in Uniform

(Girls in Uniform)

Adapted from Christa Winsloe's play, "Yesterday and Today," directed by Leontine Sagan under the artistic supervision of Carl Froelich, distributed by John Krimsky and Gifford Cochran.

The Cast

The Principal Emilia Unda
Fräulein von Bernburg.....Dorothea Wieck
Fräulein von Kesten.....Hedwig Schlichter
Ilse von Westhagen.....Ellen Schwannicke
Manuela von Menhardis.....Hertha Thiele

RUMORS of this picture have been crossing the Atlantic from Berlin and Paris and London, and other rumors have drifted about New York—the first bearing news of something extraordinarily successful and extraordinarily good, the second hinting at difficulties with censors and implying things that could not be put precisely into words. Now that the picture has been shown it is easy to believe in the European success, just as it is hard to imagine how any sensible person could have seen anything in it any way dangerous for the public to look upon.

The title, like the opening shots of the picture, is meant to convey the impression of young girls under subjection to strict militarized discipline like that of the Prussian army. The purpose of the picture—just as obvious as that of Dickens when he wrote

novels to show the evils of some of the schools of his day—is to protest against the harshness and cruelty of that method of education for sensitive girls at the most sensitive period of their lives. It is a passionate and moving protest, in the form of a dramatic conflict between martinet severity, and sympathetic understanding and love.

One must emphasize this purpose in the beginning, in face of the uninformed notion so prevalent that the film is in some vague way a study in neurotic psychology.

The story begins with a girl of fourteen, recently motherless, entering a school for the daughters of Prussian officers, where life is regulated by bugle calls and the old-time ideal of military caste and subservience governs the entire upbringing of the young students—some of them so young they are scarcely out of the playroom. Manuela is not an abnormal child—she is just ordinarily sensitive and affectionate, with a natural distaste for the ugly knot her hair is forced

back into and the ugly striped sack of a uniform she must wear. And the teachers are stern female replicas of the Prussian army-officer type—all except Fräulein von Bernburg, who believes that she will do much better educating if she tries to be something of a mother to the young girls in her charge.

Naturally Manuela's affections go out to this calm and understanding woman, and her whole

BULLETIN

1932

Exceptional

Mädchen in Uniform
A Nous la Liberté
The Battle of Gallipoli
Road to Life

Honorable Mention

Der Andere
Arrowsmith
As You Desire Me
Bring 'Em Back Alive
Broken Lullaby
Elisabeth von Oesterreich
Golden Mountains
Grand Hotel
Der Raub der Mona Lisa
Zwei Menschen

ambition is to please her and make her proud. The big chance comes in a play given by the girls, where she discloses a remarkable talent for acting and arouses enthusiastic admiration in the whole school. The triumph—her first bit of success—combined with some atrocious punch concocted by the kitchen women of which she drinks too much in her excitement, makes her burst out in an adoring tribute to the teacher who has been her inspiration, a scandalous performance which arouses the wrath of the principal—such emotional outbreaks mean the ruin of her system of discipline.

Her punishment—not to have any more contact with her beloved teacher—almost brings a tragedy. In the end the old principal has to face the fact that her system is that of an era definitely gone—that a new and freer generation cannot be controlled any longer by it.

It is a simple enough story, whose strength is in the extraordinary sympathy that has gone into its filming, the unpretentious but highly skillful building up of the drama, the unerring judgment in the casting of the actors. It is impossible to recall a motion picture in which the peculiarly touching quality of adolescence, when the child is growing through the groping change to womanhood, has been so delicately and movingly shown. Perhaps the reason is that the picture was directed by a woman—obviously a woman who feels deeply about the life of young girls in school and has a talent near to genius for putting her feelings into dramatic form. The film is an unusual one for even Germany, whence so many unusual films have come, to have made. And it is one of the most human films that has been made anywhere.

A Film Society

AN advance memorandum has been sent out regarding the formation of a New York Film Society. "The film club was orig-

inated in France by critics, directors and enthusiasts for the exhibition of outstanding films and the support of the artistic cinema. The idea was carried throughout the Continent and across the Channel, where the London Film Society, probably the largest of its kind, has been instrumental in introducing otherwise excluded and censored films of merit to the British audience. The New York Film Society will be the first of its kind in the United States, the first 'secular' organization within the honest traditions of the non-profitmaking spectators' film club. It will be, to keep it flexible and practicable, limited to 500 members. The enrollment fee will be \$1 and membership \$10 a year, payable semi-annually in advance. Every member will be entitled to one ticket for each of the ten regular performances, held most likely on Sunday, and may obtain a guest-ticket for \$1 a showing. Tickets are transferable, but not membership except by permission of the executive body. In addition to admission to the regular performances, members will receive a program-magazine before each performance and other privileges such as admission to lectures by noted directors, actors and critics of the film. Since the Society is non-profit-making, all the moneys accruing above expenses will be converted into advantages to the membership, such as the importation of exceptional films, the invitation to important artists to speak before the Society, the improvement of the program-magazine or bulletin, the restoration of pictures, et cetera.

"The membership will vote ahead of time for certain pictures and programs from a submitted list of available ones, and will also be asked to signify their desires as to such programs."

Those interested in this project who wish further information, should write either to Critchell Rimington, 386 Fourth Ave., New York City, or to Harry Alan Potamkin, 226 East 36th St., New York City.

Jean A. LeRoy, Pioneer

ON August 9th Jean A. Le Roy died in his home in New York, a poor man who in all probability might have been a millionaire if his business sagacity had been equal to his inventive genius. As long ago as the eighteen-seventies he was trying to photograph motion. In 1894, when Edison's Kinetoscope had demonstrated in its peepshow fashion that a succession of photographs can create the illusion of continuous movement, Le Roy built and exhibited a projection machine which took these moving pictures out of their little box and threw them on a screen, a device that made the modern motion picture theatre. It was over two years later before it occurred to him that perhaps he ought to patent his invention. He was too late. His other inventions include the automatic shutter, used on all projection machines, and the modern projection booth—both of them designed for the prevention of fire.

Mr. Le Roy's pioneering was long outshone by the brilliance of more famous names. But last year a belated recognition of his work came from the Society of Motion Picture Engineers, and the year before that, on the occasion of his seventy-sixth birthday and the thirty-sixth anniversary of the showing of his projection machine, the National Board of Review passed resolutions in his honor, which it is perhaps fitting to quote here as a summation of his life's work:

WHEREAS, it is appropriate for this Conference, one of whose aims is to note outstanding accomplishments in the field of motion pictures, to give recognition to personalities as well as forces which have contributed to those accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, Jean A. Le Roy, through the invention of his "Marvelous Cinematographe," first publicly demonstrated thirty-six years ago on February 5th, 1894, when a motion picture was projected on the screen, established himself among inventors

as one who had made practical the motion picture projector which is a mechanical basis of the medium and art of the motion picture; and

WHEREAS, Jean A. Le Roy, personally having gained nothing through his part in the work of invention and having, as far as

(Continued on page 23)

James R. Quirk

MANY people may go to the motion picture theatre because of their interest in story portrayal or camera technique but how many, many more go because of their interest in the players? They know all about the stars, a surprising amount of information on how they live, what they do and what they like. The stars are their theatre—storybook characters come real, sort of fictionized beings about whom one can always know more through the sequel ever forthcoming. And this sequel is supplied by the fan magazine, the medium which brings the player to the public. A pioneer in fan publications is Photoplay Magazine and the one responsible for this magazine as editor and as publisher during its expansion since 1914, as the motion picture developed, was James R. Quirk. The remarkable growth of this magazine, which carried in serial form the exhaustive history of the motion picture by Terry Ramsaye thus not limiting its field to personalities, made Mr. Quirk an outstanding figure in screen literature. His untimely death this past summer at the age of forty-eight caused a distinct loss in the field of motion picture publications. Mr. Quirk had from his experience addressed a past conference of the National Board on the subject "The Direct Influence of the Motion Picture on the American Public." This address has been remembered and often quoted by those hearing him and we can say with a certainty that Mr. Quirk will continue to be remembered and quoted generally by his many friends and readers.

A Study of the Industry

CONTINUALLY we note evidences of the important place of the motion picture in present day life as a form of artistic expression, as an entertainment medium, as an influence on manners and customs, and as an industry. An example of its standing as an industry is shown by the recent publication of a pamphlet entitled "Motion Picture Films" by the United States Department of Commerce. This pamphlet to quote the introduction, is "one of the first of a series of trade and economic studies based on statistics derived from the first nationwide Census of Distribution, which is a part of the Fifteenth Decennial Census of the United States." It further says, "The motion picture industry is one of the 326 industries into which manufacturing and producing establishments have been divided by the census of manufactures. The industry is said to have a capital investment around two billion dollars. It assumes a position of unusual importance because of the rapidity of its development, the swiftness with which radical changes of a technical nature have taken place, its geographic concentration, and its far-reaching influence upon social and economic standards and conduct.

"The motion picture is not only an outstanding industry—it is an unique industry both in production and distribution. One of its unusual features according to the pamphlet is the extreme concentration of the studios in the State of California. Of the 142 plants covered by the census, 58 are in California, but these plants account for 70.28 per cent of the total annual output of the United States. New York State is next in importance, with 30 plants, producing 23.83 per cent of the value of all the products of the industry. The State of California and New York together account for 94.11 per cent of all production, the remainder being scattered throughout the United States. The other unusual feature is while the production of motion pictures is highly

concentrated, the market for the products of the industry is widespread and scattered throughout the world. The market for theatrical and news films, for example, consists of all exhibiting theatres in the United States and in foreign countries, of which there were in 1929, 57, 743 distributed as follows:

United States	20,500
Europe	27,379
Latin America	3,981
Far East	3,976
Canada	1,100
Africa	755
Near East	52

Furthermore, the theatres in the United States were distributed throughout the 48 States and the District of Columbia, with no special tendency toward any high degree of concentration."

Often in the work of community support of good films the wish is expressed that some films might be shown locally and others not or that some might be shown at a different time or in a different way, but before criticizing we must understand the intricate problem of booking and this bulletin helps us to do that. It says, "Because of the concentration of production on one hand, and the wide market for motion pictures on the part of exhibiting theatres on the other, the problem of distribution in the industry is indeed a vital one. It involves an organization carefully branched out in order to reach economically all parts of the market, and to give each territory the necessary cultivation. Again, there is a difference in the dealings with each type of exhibitor. Theatres may be divided for such purposes into large chains, small chains, individual first-run houses, and small theatres, each requiring separate treatment. Furthermore, some of the theatre chains are owned by producers, while other theatres are not integrated with either the production or distribution phases of the business. The distribution problem is further complicated by the fact that motion pictures, unlike other commodities, are seldom sold, nor are they

in reality leased or rented, although the term 'rental' is used. What actually happens is that the distributor or producer who holds the copyright to a picture grants the exhibitor a license which gives him the right to show the picture and supplies him with the positive print in order that the right may be exercised by the licensee. Such right is normally confined to a certain location and to a certain specified time.

"The price charged for films may be in the form of a flat rate rental or a percentage of box-office receipts, or a combination of the two. Rental prices are largely a matter of trading and bargaining between the distributor and the exhibitor. Price is governed primarily by the exhibitor's ability to pay, which in turn depends upon the theatre's seating capacity, number of performances a day, price of admission, prestige of the house, and above all the pulling power of the picture or the actors starring in it. When the films are rented on a percentage of box-office receipts, the problem arises of checking the theatre receipts, which in itself has developed so many difficulties that a separate organization . . . was formed with branches in key cities throughout the United States, so that its large corps of checking field representatives may perform the function of determining the exact number of ticket sales and theatre receipts where pictures are played on a percentage basis.

"Furthermore, distribution of a film must be effected promptly. It is said that fully 50 per cent of the receipts from most feature pictures are collected within 90 days from the date they have been released for distribution. The public seems to be more eager to see a picture immediately after its release than at a later date. Effective planning for distribution thus becomes a prime prerequisite."

Many vital statistics of the motion picture industry are included in this pamphlet and if you are statistically-minded enough to wish to peruse them it can be secured for 5c from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

A Film Suggests Books on a Timely Subject

THE present status of business and finance finds all of us laymen questioning and the answers we usually get "the banks are responsible" or "the banks can solve it," still leave us wondering. The motion picture has attempted to answer the bank's part graphically in *American Madness* and if after seeing this picture you are inspired to further look up the answer for yourself the Cleveland Public Library offers you help in the preparation of a list of reading related to the film prepared in bookmark form. We quote from the bookmark as follows:

AMERICAN MADNESS

A Film of Modern Banking

"Money, the life blood of the nation,
Corrupts and stagnates in its veins
Unless a proper circulation
Its motion and its heat maintains."

—Dean Swift.

Finance in Fiction

"Price of many a crime untold;
Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!
Good or bad a thousand fo'd."

—Thomas Hood.

Birmingham—"Gossamer"
Chamberlain—"Silver Cord"
Kelland—"Gold"
Kelland—"Hard Money"
Webster—"Banker and the Bear"
Weyman—"Ovingtons' Bank"

Some Great Financiers

"There are geniuses in trade, as well as in war,
or in the State, or letters; and the reason why
this or that man is fortunate is not to be told.
It lies in the man."—Emerson.

Burr—"Portrait of a Banker; James Stillman"
Ravage—"Five Men of Frankfort"
Warshaw—"Alexander Hamilton"
Winkler—"Morgan the Magnificent"

Banking

Borden—"Banking and Business Ethics"
"Ethical Problems of Modern Finance"
Haines—"The Small Loan Department"
Hazelwood—"The Bank and its Directors"
Hoggson—"Epochs in American Banking"
Ivey—"Getting Ahead in the Bank"

Human Relations

"Men at some time are masters of their fates;
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings."
—Shakespeare.

Gow—"Elements of Human Engineering"
Gow—"Foundations of Human Engineering"
Myers—"Human Engineering"

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

These Theatres Consider the Children

THE work of the Public Relations Department of the Fox West Coast Theatres has received because of its outstanding character wide recognition and has acted as suggestion to theatres and better films groups in many parts of the country. We asked Miss Ryllis Hemington who is Director of Public Relations to give us some word of this activity for our Magazine and she sends us the following. It contains we believe much of helpful advice for those now taking up their new fall theatre interests and shows that the theatre managers, at least in these Fox theatres, are anxious and willing to cooperate in every way with the community desires. Undoubtedly managers of other theatres having this work brought to their attention by informed people will be glad to do likewise, so we are pleased to be able to pass on to you ideas and plans sent to us by Miss Hemington.

She says; "It is our ambition to maintain valuable contacts in every city and town in which Fox West Coast Theatres operate in the fifteen states west of the Mississippi River. These contacts are maintained through personal contact and personal correspondence with such individuals as city and county superintendents of schools, prominent pastors, presidents of the various women's clubs and Parent-Teacher groups, librarians, Boy Scout executives, men's service clubs and other organizations that cooperate with our theatre managers toward helping to raise the standard of appreciation of motion pictures. These individuals receive general bulletins from our department which carry articles covering better films activities in various places, articles from the clergy, educators, and others, on

the subject of motion pictures and their value, visual education, et cetera. They also receive the weekly suggestions for children's programs as well as the weekly service called 'Unbiased Opinions.'

"With this material constantly pouring into the field, you may well imagine that our theatre managers have a most interested group to contact and splendid examples of cooperation are constantly reported by these people and our theatre managers from many places. We are deluged with requests from clubs, Parent-Teacher groups, men's service clubs, et cetera, within close proximity to our general offices, for speakers on their annual motion picture programs. We offer our theatres as meeting places for monthly motion picture conferences of the national women's organizations and cooperate with them in helping to add to the various funds which these groups always 'have in the making'. It seems that almost every community now has its Motion Picture Council composed of various men's and women's organizations that are locally prominent and interested in motion pictures. These councils are of a constructive nature. We have cooperated with and encouraged them in every possible way. Many are composed of people who are able to see the theatre managers' problems, as well as the ideal situation toward which we all work."

One of the most noted pieces of work done by the Public Relations Department under Miss Hemington's direction has been that with the children, especially as carried out in the Fox Leaders Clubs. These clubs were inaugurated, she tells us, under the Children's Welfare Department. "The plan for their operation is highly acceptable to both the public and the theatre managers as it combines *correct showmanship* and *community cooperation*. The exhibitors stress the point that the theatre is no longer an

isolated bit of commercialism outside the community interest, but today an integral part of the community life. Consistent with the policy to cooperate with the community, the Fox Leaders Clubs, organizations of boys and girls of elementary school age, were formed for the purpose of establishing entertainment of a higher type, augmented by a recreational program, designed to directly assist in building up an appreciation of the more worth while things of life. During the past the theatre has catered chiefly to the adult audience, no particular effort having been made in the selection of programs for youthful minds. The theatres conducting the Leaders Club bring before their juvenile audiences pictures that will build character, raise ideals and withal be entertaining. To merely sit and watch a picture is not enough for the lively members of these clubs. They contribute to the program, by making posters, writing jingles, singing songs, or writing stories. Under the direction of a trained teacher with the inspiration and impetus for programs, each member works along that line in which she or he has the greatest ability. Recognition of achievements, of initiative, of excellence of conduct is shown by appropriate awards. Club activities are not always confined to the theatre. There are treasure hunts, Easter egg hunts, birthday parties, Christmas parties, Hallowe'en parties—no month goes by without some entertainment and activity of this sort. The mental health is no less important than the physical well being of the child. Both of these are stressed in programs outlined by the Director of the Clubs and the theatre management and are both covered in

'The Fox Leaders' Code of Ethics'

Ideals and practice of healthful living in both mind and body.
Fuller understanding of and participation in community affairs.
A higher standard for the use of leisure time.
Appreciation of worth while amusements.
Greater appreciation of home and family life.

Respect for law and order.

Realization of one's own abilities and opportunity to develop them.

"The programs for the club shows are carefully arranged. The current screen program, beyond the newsreels and short subjects, providing the latter are suitable, is not shown. The feature and shorts when necessary are supplanted with pictures approved for children. There is an abundance of approved pictures available for showing that can be secured at low rentals from the various producers. (Miss Hemington will, we believe if you find your exhibitor has difficulty in securing prints, help you with suggestions from those which have been used in her theatres.) All children of elementary school age are charged 10c admission to each weekly club performance. An accurately kept filing system, with information secured from identification cards facilitates the issuance of congratulatory messages and complimentary tickets to club members on their birthdays. This idea is religiously followed up by club directors and managers in points where Fox Leaders Clubs are now in operation. The cooperation of local papers as co-sponsors of the Clubs is enlisted. The children also are supposed to have their own paper, known as Fox Leaders Weekly Magazine. The members contribute to this publication, which carries timely news items, jokes, club activities, and features the ensuing week's program."

To give you but one concrete example from the many doing the effective work of these clubs we reprint from some of the wealth of material sent to us by Miss Hemington from the Spokane (Wash.) Fox Trailers Club for which she has great praise. It reads, "When the Fox Theatre in Spokane had its formal opening an innovation was introduced to the community in the form of a Child Welfare Department. The director of this department is Mrs. F. J. Greene, president of the Presidents Council of Women in Spokane, a most able executive and highly qualified to direct children's activities. The medium of expression

for this Child Welfare Department is a Fox Trailers Club, founded for the intelligent and productive use of leisure hours. Each Saturday there are special matinees, the subjects carefully selected under the advice of the five most prominent women's organizations in the country. There are parties and outings. Here young America is taught fine citizenship. Here childhood's dynamic energy is directed to worth while outlets, and Spokane has welcomed this new movement in the name of youth."

The suggestion that the cooperation of the newspapers be secured is certainly carried out by Mrs. Greene for she keeps the work of her Club continually before the public with such statements as the following appearing in the Spokane papers: "Real Fox Trailers are proud of their law of good sportsmanship. This is exemplified in their manners and in their activities during the club period. They obey the law of right and fair fun, as the best Americans do. They play the game by entering into the spirit of the club's purpose, applauding the efforts of others and passing around word of cheer in a generous and honorable way. In so living up to the Trailers' creed, they become worthy members of their community and loyal citizens of their country.

"Deep in the heart of every child lies the gang spirit. Neighborhood groups of children organize little clubs that spring into existence suddenly. They do this because they have reached a certain stage of development that prompts them to break away from the shelter of childhood. To them a club is the world in miniature and within its circle they have a chance to learn the first lesson in leadership, teamwork, tolerance, diplomacy, responsibility and self-reliance that they will need in their future business and social life. Our child welfare department has not lost sight of this recreational opportunity to provide a stimulating influence of new interests and new associations. The Fox Trailers feel their joy of service to their group manifests itself in a multitude of ways.

"School children write criticisms of books and plays. Why not of moving pictures? As a matter of fact, the movie comes much closer to the actual living experience of the child than do most books or dramas. The choices and the judgments of these best-thinking young people concerning pictures ought to be a weighty balance scale for producers who have to please them in their youth, and also as they grow even more capable of judgments as the years pass. The thing to remember is that no pressure was brought to bear on these children as to whether they should choose to approve or criticize.

"This year the Fox Trailers have taken active part in the Washington Bicentennial observance, inspiring the new generation with the lessons to be learned from the life of the father of our country. If America is to fulfill the hopes of her founders, she must have faith, hope and trust in the ideals established by our young people today." And so through cooperative effort and with a continuous appeal to children's attention and parents' support this work goes on in Spokane and other cities.

THE Motion Picture Council of Springfield, Mass., has fifty-four organizations in its membership according to word received from Mrs. Fred B. Cross, former chairman of the Council. Representatives from the Council are assigned to each of the theatres in the district and the reports indicate that the theatre managers are co-operating in a remarkable degree. In order to foster more discriminating and selective demand in motion picture entertainment on the part of the local community the Council publishes selections of films in four local papers and the regular meetings are attended with much interest. During the summer an election of officers was held and Mrs. S. H. Crane was chosen as the new chairman. She brings experience to the work, being a member of the Motion Picture Division of the State Federation of Women's Clubs.

IN this department of the June issue we reprinted from an editorial appearing in a newspaper in a community where a new Better Films Council was functioning, regarding the importance of making a concerted effort on the part of such groups to see that the good pictures pay, those which perhaps have not the popular appeal. We did not give the name of the paper or group as we did not think the suggestion was particularly needed by this Council knowing what efforts were being made by it along this line but we did think the thought one worthy of passing on, for there is a rather wide spread tendency, as we all know, to talk better pictures but not to be so certain of supporting them, we have our classic examples in *Old Ironsides*, *Outward Bound* and others. However, the secret will not be kept any longer for we have received a response from Mrs. Wm. C. Orton who is the Publicity Chairman of the organization in this community which is the Staten Island (N. Y.) Better Films Council.

Mrs. Orton writes: "In the June issue of the National Board of Review Magazine there is an article which speaks of the problems which the managers of the movie houses face while showing worth while pictures. We all know that any change takes time and patience on the part of the managers. The public cannot be educated in a minute but that it is being done speaks for itself in the class of pictures being shown. There is now a Better Films Chairman in every Women's Club, patriotic society and organization, who will be only too glad to cooperate with the manager and help make his worth while pictures a success. One of our managers on Staten Island found one of his good pictures brought a very small audience so he appealed to some of the Women's Clubs and was very much pleased with the result. There is but one answer to the question—'Cooperation.' Keep behind the manager with all the influence at your command and the result will be most encouraging."

We already knew that there would be no cause for complaint from lack of support of

the worth while pictures in this community and now here is a further assurance of it in Mrs. Orton's letter speaking for the wide group representation of the Better Films Council. Mrs. Orton in her capacity of Publicity Chairman acted as visiting editor for one issue of a local newspaper this past summer and we quote from her editorial as follows: "Owing to this mechanical age leisure is increasing. We, as individuals at home or in the schools, can do much to better conditions and to guide the people to accept the best that the pictures offer. The motion pictures which are shown in your local theatres have much to offer in the form of recreation, education, inspiration and culture. What attracts one may bore the others, but when we have such pictures as *Abraham Lincoln*, *Skippy*, *The Man Who Played God*, *The Symphony of Six Millions*, *The Explorers of the World*, et cetera, there is something for everyone, be it history, adventure or romance. All pictures have been graded by previewing groups, according to their appeal to adults and juniors. It is up to the community, with the cooperation of the managers, to work for the betterment of the movies so as to attain a worth while influence. The recently formed Staten Island Better Films Council displays each week in the schools, libraries and postoffices a list of the pictures showing in our local theatres with comments on each. There is an increasing interest on the part of the public in the use of these guides for the selection of motion pictures."

BELIEVING that of all amusements the motion picture is the greatest educational force yet seen, the Patrons' League of the Stonewall Jackson School of Newport News, Va., has inaugurated a bulletin system within the school whereby parents and pupils may at all times learn in advance which of the current movie attractions at local theatres are best suited for children. The plan was the outgrowth of a talk by Mrs. P. F. Halsey, chairman of the Motion

Picture Committee of the League, on "The Movies as They Affect Our Children and What We Can Do About Them." These listings will be posted on the school bulletin board, and copies will also be given to parents upon request. The plan is seen as a solution of the hit-or-miss judgments parents have hitherto made in deciding which theatres to attend with their children.

Mrs. Halsey writes, "Beginning with a simple plan of selecting local pictures for the benefit of the mothers in our school, public interest has caused us to develop an organization, sponsored by the Federated Patrons' League of the city with a purpose and plan very much along the lines indicated in your Motion Picture Study Club pamphlet. We are trying to obtain week-end programs for the children and have appointed a 'special programs committee' to see what they can do."

THE Atlanta (Ga.) Better Films Committee got off to a flying start in its new season of activity at a meeting held on August 24th. The new president of the Committee, Mr. J. W. Setze, Jr., presided. It was our pleasure to have Mr. Setze a visitor at the National Board this summer, during a northern trip, and we know that he has many ideas and much enthusiasm to bring to this work for the good films. He realizes the value of theatre cooperation and has most pleasant contacts with the city's theatre managers making it possible to get what he and his committee want from the exhibitors as far as it is within their power. He is much interested in Junior Review work and plans to emphasize it during the year. It can be said that Mr. Setze is going to keep his Committee in good control at least he is going to have the means of calling them effectively to order, since at this August meeting he was presented with a gavel made from the wood of a famous sassafras tree which has stood for a hundred years on the lot of the First Methodist Church in Atlanta.

ALTHOUGH especially arranged junior matinees are popular in many communities still many other communities are using the plan of sponsoring the good junior shows as they come along. A letter to us from Mrs. Henry P. Briggs of Wellesley Hills, Mass., chairman of the Children's Moving Picture Committee of the Woman's Club, reports that they have done this. She writes of this and other activities as follows: "The Children's Moving Picture Committee of the Wellesley Hills Woman's Club has functioned quietly but none the less seriously during the winter 1931-32. Contrary to last year's policy of providing, in cooperation with the theatre manager of our local Community Playhouse, special moving picture matinees for children at regular intervals, it has selected and sponsored as they came along, pictures from the regular programs which were particularly suitable for junior matinees—*Penrod and Sam*, *Sooky*, *Around the World in 80 Minutes*. Due to unavoidable circumstances such as the infantile paralysis epidemic last fall, it was impossible to sponsor two or three other suitable pictures. A western picture was substituted for the matinee showing for *Frankenstein* during its regular run here. The Committee has tried to keep in touch with the general trend of affairs in the motion picture world by studying your very helpful literature and that sent out by Mrs. Winter's Committee in Hollywood and by sending representatives to meetings of various kinds where the question of the movies is discussed. The manager of the local Playhouse lists his pictures in his weekly bulletins according to your rating. We feel very grateful to him for his very generous interest in creating and maintaining a high standard for adult and children's moving pictures in the town of Wellesley, as evident at all times."

Mrs. Briggs has given much time and interest to this work during her chairmanship and she is passing on to her successor, Mrs. Kingsley V. Dey, a live and thriving plan of activity.

THE Better Films Council of St. Louis (Mo.) is an organization of representative women, which has instituted a system of cooperation with theatre owners to establish and maintain the highest moral and artistic standards in motion picture entertainment. Mrs. Arretus Franklyn Burt, state chairman of motion pictures of the Missouri Federation of Women's Clubs, is the president of the Council, which represents 75,000 women through its thirteen member groups: Missouri Federation of Women's Clubs, Child Conservation Conference, College Club, Conference of Jewish Women, War Mothers, Women's Christian Temperance Union, Wednesday Club, Good Will Club, Board of Religious Organizations, Catholic Alumnae, St. Louis Council of Parents and Teachers, St. Louis County Council of Parents and Teachers, and St. Louis Tercentenary Shakespeare Club.

Within the last two years, Mrs. Burt believes, there has been a decided improvement in pictures. Mr. and Mrs. Average Movie-Goer, are learning to discriminate between good and bad films, and no longer go to a show without having some idea of what is in store for them. Broadcasting of reviews by educational institutions such as St. Louis University has also had an effect in promoting a higher development of the screen's educational, civic and social values.

So far the St. Louis Council has succeeded in inducing managers of many of the fifty-one neighborhood picture houses in St. Louis to inaugurate special "family night" programs providing a program suited to both children and grown-ups on Friday. Two of the key theatres have opened for Saturday morning matinees for children. On one Saturday each month the Fox Theatre presents a visual education program and the Missouri Theatre has a special show each Saturday morning. More and more the feeling deepens that children should be given special showings and discouraged from miscellaneous attendance. "For the first time mothers have been making inquiries about the quality of the coming attractions,"

the owner of one of the neighborhood theatres stated recently.

Mrs. Burt does not limit her activities simply to the St. Louis Council, although that is a large field, as she writes to us of a joint meeting of the Better Films Council of St. Louis and St. Louis County and she attended a state convention of the theatre owners of America as a guest speaker to make an appeal for more family night pictures—pictures with a correct portrayal of American youth, and to request the theatre owners to set aside Friday night as "family night." At the close of the convention they voted to inaugurate this custom in their 350 theatres and to petition the producers to make more pictures for family audiences.

DIFFERENT ways of using motion pictures in organized recreation programs were described several months ago in this magazine by Mr. Mathewson of the Union County (N. J.) Recreation Commission.* And in line with this we present here the motion picture plan pursued by The Lakeside (Ohio) Association, a unique project known as "The Chautauqua of the Great Lakes." The assistant manager, Mr. K. E. Miller, writes to us about it as follows: "Lakeside is a summer chautauqua, educational and religious institution, and we present in our large auditorium seating 4,000 people, a variety of programs during the two months of July and August. We have this year installed sound-on-film equipment and it is our plan to show a good talking picture once a week as part of our regular chautauqua and entertainment program. We must of necessity show at that place only those that are unquestionable as to morals and standards and we are also desirous of attempting to present pictures that will not have been seen in the average theatre.

"Then we have in addition a small theatre seating 400 in which we present the regular motion picture attractions changing the programs three times weekly. This hall we operate from about June 1st to October 1st.

* *Motion Pictures in Public Recreation*, June, 1932.

We eliminate from these programs all of the pictures which are not suitable for family audiences and children. It is in selecting these pictures that your Weekly Guide is particularly valuable to us as we always omit these pictures that are marked there for mature audiences.

"You might be interested to know that after three or four years of dealing with film companies I have been able to secure the selected pictures I want from the various film companies at practically the price I want to pay. I mention this because I have read many times in various publications that the block-booking method is the greatest handicap faced by non-theatrical institutions."

IT is encouraging to have local newspapers interested in printing the Photoplay Guide compiled by Better Films Committees and more encouraging when they show a special interest in this feature such as that about which Mrs. H. D. Fry, acting chairman of the Westwood (N. J.) Better Films Committee, in the absence of the chairman, Mrs. William Carter, who is ill, writes us as follows: "The editor of one of our local papers in which we publish our Guide has asked me . . . for an article telling his readers how our Guide is compiled—where we get our information, what our audience suitability means and how it is determined and also just what we represent. He asked permission to insert an explanation of our audience terms in the heading of the Guide."

Below we quote from her story prepared in answer to the editor's request. "The Better Films Committee in this town is made up of representatives from all organizations interested in wholesome entertainment for our citizens and in the welfare of our children. The theatres show pictures of all types; some of them have educational and moral value; others provide clean, wholesome amusement. There are also the sordid, morbid, gangster, sex and so-called 'horror' pictures which are certainly not regarded as suitable entertainment for juven-

ile audiences. The function of the committee is to endorse the good pictures and ignore those not so good, as to condemn them would only arouse curiosity in the minds of those to whom we wish to be of assistance. Thus we can only improve the pictures by encouraging everyone to patronize the better films."

Mrs. Fry follows this with a helpful explanation of the Guide and audience suitability and ends with this thought which cannot be too strongly emphasized "We are constantly being reminded that the only way the exhibitors judge as to what the public wants is by their box-office receipts."

MRS. PIERCY CHESTNEY, president of the Macon (Ga.) Better Films Committee and chairman of the Motion Picture Committee of the Georgia State Congress of Parents and Teachers attended the summer institute of the congress at the University of Georgia. She presented the motion picture outline for the next two years, which was accepted by the board of directors in session there preceding the congress, and conducted a round table discussion of motion picture work to be done by Parent-Teacher organizations throughout the state. Mrs. Chestney has had a vast amount of experience in motion picture work with children in arranging the outstanding Macon matinees during her eight years as president of the local Committee and she makes therefore an excellent better films chairman for this state organization having all pertaining to children as its interest.

EARLY last fall we received word from Mrs. R. C. Brown of Red Bank, N. J., of her connection with the Parent-Teacher Association and her interest in recommending films for young people. Weekly thereafter she has been devoting attention to this activity and that the effort on her part has not gone unnoticed was proven when a rising vote of thanks was given her at the executive meeting of the Red Bank P.-T. A. held at the end of the season.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIED INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

*A BILL OF DIVORCEMENT—*From the play by Clemence Dane, directed by George Cukor, with a cast including John Barrymore, Billie Burke and Katherine Hepburn. RKO-Radio, 7 reels. A fine play about a man, his wife and daughter, made into a fine picture, dramatic, moving, extremely well done. John Barrymore will surprise even his admirers, and the rest of the cast acts superbly. An altogether unusual film, both artistically and as entertainment. Mature audience.*

BLONDE VENUS—*Screen story by Jules Furthman and S. K. Lauren, directed by Josef von Sternberg, with a cast including Marlene Dietrich, Herbert Marshall and Cary Grant. Paramount, 10 reels. How a woman accepted another man's friendship to save her husband's life, and her subsequent fight to keep her little son. Rather slow but abounding in beautiful photography and excellent acting. Mature audience.*

BRAND IN DER OPER (Fire in the Opera) (Barcarolle)—*From the comedy-drama by George Kaiser, directed by Karl Froelich, with a cast including Gustav Froelich, Alexa Engstroem and Gustav Gruendgens. Capital, 9 reels. A German film concerning the rivalry of two men for a young opera singer. Interesting sights of life behind the scenes in an opera house, some excellent singing and one of Germany's most likeable young leading men as the hero. Family audience.*

CHANDU THE MAGICIAN—*From the radio play by Harry Earnshaw, V. M. Oldham and R. R. Morgan, directed by Marcel Varnel and William Menzies, with a cast including Edmund Lowe, Bela Lugosi and Irene Ware.*

Fox, 7 reels. A thrilling tale of Eastern villainy and mysticism very well done with good comedy touches which will be entertaining to children and to grown-ups who like this type. It concerns an English family, one of whose members, Chandu, possesses mysterious Yogi powers, who fall into the hands of a merciless tyrant in Egypt. Family audience. Junior matinee.

COME ON DANGER—*Screen story by Bennett Cohen and Lester Ilfold, directed by Robert Hill, with a cast headed by Tom Keene. RKO-Radio, 6 reels. A western that is different in that this time a girl is accused of being the leader of a cattle rustling band, but she is vindicated and saved by a young ranger with the help of his horse. Family audience. Junior matinee.*

COME ON TARZAN—*Screen story and direction by Alan James, with a cast including Ken Maynard and Myrna Kennedy. World Wide, 6 reels. Good outdoor entertainment, about a remarkable stallion and a man's fight to save the wild horses of the range. Ken Maynard and his horse, Tarzan, are as good as ever. Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE CRASH—*From the novel by Larry Barretto, directed by William Dieterle, with a cast including Ruth Chatterton, George Brent and Paul Cavanaugh. First National, 5 reels. The troubles of the spoiled rich after the crash, including a charming woman's indecision about what man she cares for most. Done with excellent taste and well acted, but the story turns out to be rather pointless with a somewhat obscure moral. Mature audience.*

THE CROOKED CIRCLE—*Screen story by Ralph Spence, directed by H. Bruce Humberstone, with a cast including Ben Lyon, Zasu Pitts and James Gleason. World Wide, 7 reels. An amusing comedy-mystery. Secret passages, moving panels and spooky people—all the usual hair-raising thrills—entertainingly presented with Zasu Pitts getting a good round of laughs. Family audience.*

THE DIARY OF A REVOLUTIONIST—*Screen story by J. A. Protazanov and J. I. Urinov, directed by the latter, with a cast*

headed by G. V. Mouzalovsky. *Amkino*, 8 reels. A man, revisiting the scenes of his adventures in the revolution, keeps a diary recording the differences between then and now. The dramatic part of the story concerns getting a big steamer finished and launched on time. The propaganda element preaches sticking to one's job and working hard. Recommended for those particularly interested in Russia, not for its artistic merit, which is not up to that of the best Russian films. *Family audience.*

EXPOSED—Screen story by Mauri Grashin, directed by Albert Herman, with a cast including William Collier, Jr., and Barbara Kent. *Eagle*, 6 reels. A young ambulance doctor undertakes a dangerous mission serving as the doctor for a gang of crooks in order to expose them. A pleasant little story with less emphasis on the gangsters and more on the romance between the doctor and a young nurse and on a little orphan boy they befriend. *Family audience.*

HAT CHECK GIRL—From the novel by Rian James, directed by Sidney Lanfield, with a cast including Sally Eilers, Ben Lyon and Monroe Owsley. *Fox*, 6 reels. A gay and amusing picture of the wise-cracking type telling of the romance between a hat check girl and a millionaire's son in the midst of glittering night club life. *Mature audience.*

THE ISLE OF PARADISE—Directed by Charles T. Trago. *Eagle*, 5 reels. Interesting and often lovely pictures of life on the island of Bali, accompanied by a talker who takes the palm for pompous silliness. *Family audience.*

MAGIC NIGHT—Screen story by Holt Marvell and George Posford, directed by Herbert Wilcox, with a cast including Jack Buchanan and Gina Malo. *United Artists*, 6 reels. A musical romance of Vienna, before, during and after the World War, wherein the war and old social distinctions separate two lovers, who come together again when the war is over. Two leading actors of charm and a pleasant though leisurely entertainment. *Family audience.*

***THE NIGHT OF JUNE 13th**—Screen story by Agnes Leahy, Brian Marlow and H. S. McNutt, directed by Stephen Roberts, with a cast headed by Clive Brook and Lila Lee. *Paramount*, 8 reels. The trivial little intrigues of a suburban neighborhood build up into a strong case against a man accused of murder. A very interesting picture, directed with some originality, in which several players—Mary Boland, Charles Ruggles, Charles Grapewine and others—give excellent and amusing performances. *Family audience.*

ONE WAY PASSAGE—Screen story by Robert Lord, directed by Tay Garnett, with a cast including William Powell, Kay Francis and Aline MacMahon. *Warner*, 6 reels. A man and woman who are never to meet again—he returning to prison, she to a sanatorium—find their great moment of life on the trip from Hong Kong to San Francisco. Acted with

tenderness and humor by a capable cast, an interesting picture that might have been depressing but is not. *Mature audience.*

PACK UP YOUR TROUBLES—Screen story by Laurel and Hardy, directed by George Marshall and Raymond McCarey, with a cast headed by Laurel and Hardy. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 7 reels. Not so brisk as the Laurel and Hardy short pictures, but amusing. The two go to war and afterwards try to find a home for a dead comrade's little girl. The child who plays the little girl is delightful. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE PHANTOM OF CRESTWOOD—From the radio story by Bartlett Cormack, directed by J. Walter Ruben, with a cast including Ricardo Cortez and Karen Morley. *RKO-Radio*, 8 reels. The mystery play that has been broadcast over the radio for a prize ending. Mystifying and exciting, and well acted. *Family audience.*

***THE PHANTOM PRESIDENT**—From the novel by George F. Worts, directed by Norman Taurog, with a cast headed by George M. Cohan. *Paramount*, 9 reels. A merry satirical comedy about a banker running for the presidential nomination without popular personal appeal, who hires a double to do the campaigning for him. It has many of the qualities of the Pulitzer play "Of Thee I Sing." The first conspicuous screen success at political satire. George Cohan and Jimmy Durante are immense. *Family audience.*

RIDE 'EM COWBOY—Screen story by Kenneth Perkins, directed by Fred Allen, with a cast including John Wayne, Ruth Hall and Henry B. Walthall. *Warner*, 5 reels. A lively western in which a clever horse is almost the leading character. Good humor and plenty of excitement. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

***SMILIN' THROUGH**—From the play by Allan L. Martin, directed by Sidney Franklin, with a cast including Norma Shearer, Fredric March and Leslie Howard. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 10 reels. Fine production and acting make this popular success of the stage and silent screen more appealing than ever. It is the story of a man who tries to break up the romance between his beautiful ward and the son of the man who ruined his own romance thirty years before. *Family audience.*

THIRTEEN WOMEN—From the novel by Tiffany Thayer, directed by George Archainbeaud, with a cast including Irene Dunne, Ricardo Cortez and Myrna Loy. *RKO-Radio*, 7 reels. An unusual plot concerned with the effect of the belief in horoscopes, which develops into tense and exciting melodrama. Several excellent actresses appear in the cast. *Mature audience.*

THIS SPORTING AGE—From the story by James McGuinness, directed by A. W. Bennison and A. F. Erickson, with a cast including Jack Holt, Evelyn Knapp and Hardie Albright. *Columbia*, 7 reels. Jack Holt as an army officer

and polo star, father and pal of a motherless daughter—their adventures in a fast Long Island set which nearly proves disastrous. Pretty good drama due to likeable characters and an exciting polo game. *Mature audience.*

*TIGER SHARK—From the novel "Tuna" by Houston Branch, directed by Howard Hawks, with a cast including Edward G. Robinson, Richard Arlen and Zita Johann. First National, 7 reels. Against a background of tuna fishing, with its constant danger from sharks, is played an interesting triangle formed by a lovable, bragging fisherman, a young sailor and an exotic girl. Robinson gives one of his superlative characterizations, and the rest of the acting as well as the atmosphere is excellent. *Family audience.*

THE WESTERN CODE—Screen story by William Colt McDonald, directed by J. P. McCarthy, with a cast including Tim McCoy and Nora Lane. Columbia, 6 reels. A western that follows the well-worn line of many another western—a bad gang, a girl cheated out of her ranch, a hard-riding, quick-shooting deputy sheriff, plenty of action and only a dash of love interest. Interesting for western fans and juveniles. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

Mädchen in Uniform—9 rls.

(See page 9)

Mature audience

SHORT SUBJECTS

SCENICS AND TRAVELOGUES—1 reel each

CHILI AND OHILLS (Mexico)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. *Family audience.*

CURIOSITIES NOS. 236 and 237—Columbia. *Family audience.*

CURIOUS CUSTOMS OF THE WORLD (World Adventures)—Vitaphone. *Family audience.*

DO YOU REMEMBER No. 2—Educational. *Family audience.*

HAVANA HO! (Magic Carpet)—Fox. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

KING SALMON—Vitaphone. *Family audience.*

MALAYSIA (Vagabond Adventures)—RKO-Radio. *Family audience.*

MICHIGAN (Spirit of the Campus)—Reinold Werreuth and Glee Club. *Educational. Family audience.*

AN ORIENTAL COCKTAIL (World Adventures)—Vitaphone. *Family audience.*

PARIS (Vagabond Adventures)—RKO-Radio. *Family audience.*

PATHS IN PALESTINE (Magic Carpet)—Fox. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

RICKSHA RHYTHM (Magic Carpet)—Fox. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

*SAILING A SQUARE-RIGGER (Magic Carpet)—Fox. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 3—Columbia. *Family audience.*

SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 4—Paramount. *Family audience.*

SEEING SAMOA—Vitaphone. *Family audience.*

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 22—Universal. *Family audience.*

YALE (Spirit of the Campus)—Educational. *Family audience.*

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, SKITS AND SERIALS

THE ACID TEST—Tom Howard, Educational, 1 reel. *Family audience.*

ALUM AND EVE—Thelma Todd, Zasu Pitts, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

CONTACT—Captain Frank Hawks, Vitaphone, 1 reel. *Family audience.*

HURRICANE EXPRESS (Serial) NOS. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.—Universal, 2 reels each. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE JUNGLE MYSTERY (Serial) NOS. 10, 11, 12.—Universal, 2 reels each. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

LADIES NOT ALLOWED—Lois Moran, Columbia, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

THE LAST FRONTIER (Serial) NOS. 4, 5, 6, 7—RKO-Radio, 2 reels each. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

A MODERN CINDERELLA—Ruth Etting, Vitaphone, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

MUSIC TO MY EARS—Jack Denny and his orchestra, Vitaphone, 1 reel. *Family audience.*

RADIO THRILLS—Art Jarrett, Universal, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

ROCK A BYE COWBOY—James Gleason, Universal, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

THE SINGING PLUMBER—Donald Norris, Paramount, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

THE STREET SINGER—Arthur Tracy, Universal, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

TEE FOR TWO—Vitaphone, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

TWO LIPS AND JULEPS OR SOUTHERN LOVE AND NORTHERN EXPOSURE—The Masquers, RKO-Radio, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

CARTOONS—1 reel each

BARNYARD BUNK (Tom and Jerry)—RKO-Radio. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BETTY BOOP FOR PRESIDENT (Talkcartoon)—Paramount. *Family audience.*

BOSKO THE LUMBERJACK (Looney Tune)—Vitaphone. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE BUSY BARBER (Oswald the Lucky Rabbit)—Universal. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

CATFISH ROMANCE (Aesop Fable)—RKO-RADIO. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

COLLEGE SPIRIT (Terrytoon)—Educational. *Family audience.*

1 WISH I HAD WINGS (Merrie Melody)—Vitaphone. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

KING NEPTUNE (Silly Symphony)—United Artists. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

(Continued from page 11)

the public is concerned, remained largely unknown in his connection with it; and

WHEREAS, his seventy-sixth birthday occurs on February 5th, 1930; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that this Conference, in recognition of his pioneer achievement and of his importance in the field of invention as it pertains to the motion picture, takes this occasion to extend its greetings to Jean A. Le Roy on the event of his seventy-sixth birthday and to wish him that reward of fame in the history of the motion picture to which he is justly entitled.

EACH patron of the two theatres under construction in Rockefeller Center in New York City, will be allotted forty cubic feet of conditioned air a minute. Throughout the year, the "weather" in the theatres will be made to order. The larger, known as the International Music Hall, will seat more than 6,000 persons and use nine tons of conditioned air per minute. The Sound Motion Picture Theatre will have a seating capacity of 3,500, and be supplied with five tons per minute.

THE BETTER FILMS NATIONAL COUNCIL
of the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures
offers through its
AFFILIATED BETTER FILMS COMMITTEES
An Opportunity to Promote
Better Motion Picture Programs in Your Home Theatre

The Better Films Committee or Motion Picture Study Club plan has been found by many communities to be an adaptable and effective method of accomplishing telling organized local work for better pictures.

The purposes of the Better Films Committees affiliated with the Better Films National Council are:

To encourage study of the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, instruction and artistic expression;

To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

To emphasize the fact that the only effective way of bringing public opinion to aid in the development of the motion picture and its best uses is through the constructive methods of the Better Films movement embodying the theory of selection and classification and the seeking of community support for the better pictures.

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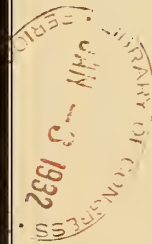
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NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. VII, No. 8

November, 1932



Paul Muni in "I Am A Fugitive From A Chain Gang" (see page 8)

*Published monthly, except July and August, by the
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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees: **The General Committee**—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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John M. Casey Retires

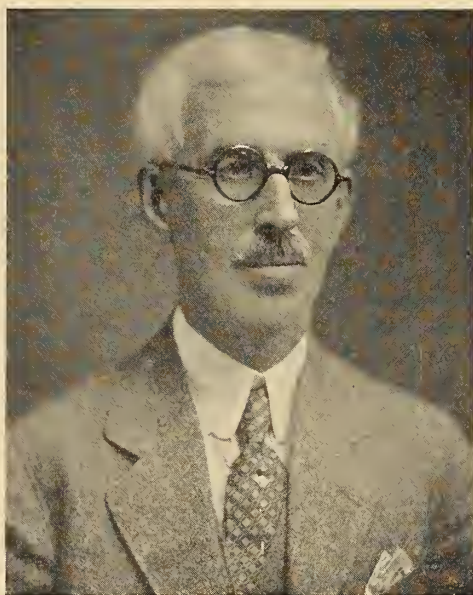
ON November first, John Michael Casey, for 28 years the public amusement official of Boston, retired from office, having reached the age-limit of seventy set by law for employees of the great New England city. Stanton White has been appointed in his place. Since 1904, uninterruptedly through all intervening city administrations, Mr. Casey has had charge of the supervision of Boston's entertainment. Through this long period he has served with distinction and honor, winning the confidence alike of public and those connected with the theatres of both screen and stage.

Popularly known as Boston's "censor,"

that term must be considered as something of a misnomer. It has not been applied to John Casey by those who have known him best, admired and trusted him for his sterling qualities as friend and councilor, and seen in him a man of liberal tendency as well as of rugged honesty in the observance of duty. In the exercise of his powers as a

city official over the entertainments of the people, he has always recognized that the theatre belongs to the public and that the rights of its patrons must be respected and safeguarded. He has sought to fit his ac-

tions to public opinion through study of the public attitude. For this he has been well equipped by experience. Behind his work was a far-reaching experience in the theatre, among people of the theatre, and with the problems of the show business. This knowledge, and his willingness at all times to recognize the rights of the people to the amusements they paid for, tended to keep his actions while he was in office from being arbitrary. When he acted it was in ac-



John M. Casey

cordance with his convictions and he did so with courage and an uncommon ability to stand by his guns. But very few indeed in his native city, either among the public or among those in the entertainment business who were in contact with him during the 28 years of his tenure of office, have failed to admit, sooner or later, the wisdom

of his course and the honesty, good will and friendliness with which he took and followed it. This was conclusively proven by the spontaneous outburst of affection and feeling of loss that greeted him at the dinner signaling his departure from office, tendered by the motion picture and theatrical interests of Boston and, led by Governor Ely, participated in by many of prominence in the public life of city and state, and by friends from localities far removed.

Mr. Casey has been a leader in the fight to free the screen from arbitrary censorship, and to center its control in the opinion of the public. He was a decisive force in bringing about the defeat of censorship at the hands of the people of Massachusetts in the referendum of 1922; his speech in San Francisco abruptly disrupted the cunning plan of a conclave of State Censorship Boards' representatives to form a National Association of State Censors, an act of termination in which the National Board of Review, speaking with all due humbleness, played its part, thus placing on the shelf the broken pieces of a move which held possibilities of untold harassment and danger both to the patrons of motion pictures and to those who produced and distributed them. On many other occasions, in various parts of the country where state censorship was threatening, he spoke in forthright terms against legal interference with the rights of the people to choose their own entertainment. His practicality and wealth of experience made his words impressive. And so, his influence not only in, but outside of Boston, has been felt widely in fields of liberal social service and social thought. To those fields he has really belonged, and to those fields his remaining years—and at seventy he is as alert and full of interest and energy as ever—belong. It is in his recognition of the social meaning and value of the motion picture that the National Board of Review has found him, from its inception, to be a trustworthy, sympathetic and cooperative public servant, and for that reason the National Board of Review is happy to render him this tribute.

And yet—to think of him only in connection with his career as Boston's public amusement official is not enough. John Casey began as a humble musician, through earnest application studied his profession, and rose to the role of a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, first as the player of the kettle drums and then as a violinist. During his first concert tour with that orchestra, while standing on a station platform, he was knocked down by the train while engines were being shifted, and his right arm severed near the shoulder. He was but forty years old at the time. With his fortitude, his intelligence, his talent and his temperament, and if it had been ordained otherwise—who knows? Certainly Boston would not have had for over a period of almost three decades the services of one of its most notable and creditable public servants, but John Casey the world would have known just the same, and very likely, for what he really is—an artist. He was born for distinction. As it is, he has won his chief distinction as an artist in friendship, and he is a national figure—the Nestor of them all in the science of public amusement.

The National Board of Review hopes to welcome him for many years to come at his accustomed place at the speakers' table at its Annual Luncheon.

THE concert pianist, Hans Hanke, at the Paramount Theatre, New York City, says that the range of music requests has increased phenomenally in the last decade. The selection he is most frequently asked to play is Liszt's "Love Dream." The other most popular classical numbers are Rachmaninoff's Prelude in G sharp minor, Beethoven's "Moonlight" sonata, Chopin's "Fantasy" and Strauss' "The Blue Danube." He plays an average of 1,226 selections a month in the Music Room of the Paramount, of which 684 are request numbers. He attributes the change to the influence of the radio and the large motion picture theatre orchestras.

A Library of Two Hundred Teaching Films

By DR. THOMAS EDWARD FINEGAN
President, Eastman Teaching Films, Inc.

The motion picture enters importantly into the life of the child in two ways—as entertainment and as education. Its uses and its effects are consequently subjects of wide interest and study to all concerned with child welfare and there is much to be gained when they are presented by one as experienced as Dr. Finegan who has been connected with education in various capacities for many years as a teacher, as assistant commissioner for elementary education of New York State, state superintendent of public instruction of Pennsylvania, director of surveys of educational systems in Buffalo, Philadelphia and Washington.

—EDITOR'S NOTE.

THERE are two questions under this heading which I shall briefly discuss. The first is—How did this library of two hundred films happen to be developed? The second is—What advantages do children derive from the use of films in their school work?

One of the last enterprises sponsored by the late George Eastman was the organization of a company for the purpose of developing and distributing among the schools and other educational institutions of the country motion pictures made expressly for the use of teachers in their daily classroom work.

When Mr. Eastman was requested by representatives of the National Education Association to develop a series of films for teaching purposes, the immediate reply of this experienced business man was, "What convincing evidence have you to show that motion pictures have teaching value?" The evidence could not be produced. Teachers were confident that films had effective teaching value. Mr. Eastman possessed like views, but he said, "Before I begin the manufacture of a product I obtain reliable information on its value and service, and the demand which these qualities of the article will create for its use. Before Eastman Kodak begins the development of films for use in the schools, the Company would desire positive proof of their teaching value."

Mr. Eastman expressed the opinion that the most practical method of determining the teaching value of films would be to have

a series of motion pictures made by competent, experienced teachers, and to use such pictures in a sufficient number of schools for an adequate period of time in regular classroom work to determine their efficiency as a classroom aid.

Mr. Eastman also expressed a willingness to meet the expense of such an experiment if the teaching profession would cooperate cordially in the enterprise. The National Education Association voted unanimously at its meeting held in Philadelphia in 1926 to extend such cooperation.

The experiment was one of the most complete, thorough and scientific experiments ever conducted in American education. It was under the immediate supervision of two of the leading educators of the country—Dr. Ben D. Wood of Columbia University, and Dr. Frank N. Freeman of the University of Chicago. The results of the experiment showed that 6500 pupils in a course of instruction for a period of twelve weeks, who had the use of motion pictures achieved records superior to those of 6500 other pupils pursuing the same identical courses of instruction, but without the use of motion pictures.

The evidence was therefore supplied to show that motion pictures could be made which could be coordinated with regular public school courses of study, that the contents of such pictures could be effectively integrated with the instruction of the classroom, and that the gains made by pupils using such films justified the expenditures required to supply them.

Since the Eastman experiment was concluded several important experiments under competent and reliable authority have been conducted in Europe. Each of these experiments has confirmed the general results obtained in the Eastman experiment.

The Eastman Kodak Company, on the results of the experiment which it sponsored, was willing to begin the development

of a library of classroom or teaching films, adequate to meet the needs of the schools, colleges and other educational institutions of the country.

The development of this library of films involved such technical skill and professional knowledge, and was a work of such proportions and importance, that it was believed that this service could be better performed through a separate corporation. Eastman Kodak Company, therefore, organized a subsidiary corporation, Eastman Teaching Films, Inc., in 1928. The subsidiary, of course, utilizes the unsurpassed photographic and technical facilities of the parent corporation.

The library now contains two hundred subjects from which schools and other educational institutions may make selections. One hundred additional reels are in various stages of production, and new releases are constantly being made. Ultimately a library of thousands of films will be available, and the curriculums of schools, colleges and technical institutions will be adequately covered.

The library already developed covers work from the Kindergarten to the University. Six films adapted to the Kindergarten and prepared by a group of Kindergarten teachers will be released within a month. A list of these films will indicate clearly the interest that children of Kindergarten age would have in them. The list is as follows: *Camels, The Seal and Walrus, Bears, The Monkey Family, Three Jungle Giants, The Cat Family*. Several additional films related to the native life of many countries will soon be released.

The subjects of Art, English, Geography, Nature Study, Health, Science and History have been treated. These relate to the work of the elementary school, the junior high school and the senior high school. The films are especially adapted to these divisions of school work. Miss Catherine E. Geary, elementary supervisor of the schools of Lebanon, Pa., in an article on "A Visual-Health Program in the Primary Grades,"

said, "The value of such a program, however, can only be determined in terms of the children's growth—mentally, physically, and socially—that it has brought about."

"We believe that we have effected such growth by our approach to a greater degree than most formal approaches could have done. In the first place, there is evidence that the children know more about milk, bread, cereals, fruits, and vegetables than ever before; they appreciate their uses and values to a greater degree; and they have carried back to their homes the very lessons they have learned. It was surprising with what seriousness and some pride they would tell their teachers and their playmates of the healthful foods they had "had for dinner." But, what is of more concern to us, such declarations gave evidence of the fact that they were *making the knowledge a part of themselves*. To them it had special significance. It had become real and practical!"

In the field of higher education, twenty-five reels have been developed for teaching purposes in medical colleges. These were prepared in collaboration with the American College of Surgeons. These films were made by several of the most distinguished physicians and surgeons in the United States. They have been extensively used in local, state and national medical meetings.

It is not possible to discuss fully the second question. A book instead of an article could be written on the advantages accruing to children who have the privilege of using motion pictures in their school work. We may, however, discuss briefly a few of the more important services which may be rendered by films that are developed on a sound pedagogical philosophy.

One of the common criticisms against the use of films has been that they lead to intellectual inactivity, or create a mere passive mental attitude on the part of children. The reports of the studies made in Great Britain, as well as those made in our own country, show that this criticism is not well founded. These reports all show that the

use of the film has a directly opposite effect. The film not only holds the attention of children, but it arouses their mental alertness to a greater degree than when the subject has the usual oral presentation. When the film is properly used, children ask questions. They discuss the film after it has been shown, and the interest created induces them to make original investigations in order to obtain a more comprehensive knowledge of the subject. This is proof of the stimulating influence of the film. It is considered, therefore, that the film increases the desire to learn, and stimulates the pupils to increased effort.

After a picture has been shown a class of pupils they are usually requested to express orally and also in writing, what they saw in the picture. The ability to express what the children have visualized, is not only stimulated, but accurate observation of what occurred in the scenes is also cultivated. The ability to see things precisely as they exist or occur, and to describe them clearly and concisely, is a quality of classroom work that pupils need to practice, and that teachers need to require. It is proven, therefore, that the film stimulates accuracy of observation, and facility of expression.

The motion picture expresses things in the nature of their environment and process of their being. It creates a setting that gives the subject pictured a realistic value. It provides the material which induces the child to reconstruct these affairs into a living reality, and enables him to visualize in a comprehensive manner the basic thought, the very heart of the lesson, which without the film must be brought within his mental grasp by the use of printed material. The motion picture, therefore, develops the imagination, and aids interpretation.

One of the most general results attained through the use of the film is the stimulus which it gives to the development of the initiative of the child. The self-activities of the child are set into operation at once. On their own volition, after seeing a picture, children will very often begin to re-

construct, at home and in school, the scenes which they saw in the picture; but more important than this, they also begin to build original scenes and objects suggested to their minds by the motion picture. The film is, therefore, an important agency in the development of the creative power of the child.

It may be said, however, that one of the chief objectives of the classroom is to train children to think—to think straight, and to do their own thinking. The information acquired through instruction, through reading or through contacts of various kinds, and the imagination and genius that is stimulated and developed, are simply the material and tools which are to be used by a child in analysing his problems, and in the development of his own power to think them through and reach sound conclusions.

The conception of the use of the motion picture in education should be upon the broad view of its universal and practical service, and not simply on the aid it may give in daily instruction—important as that service may be. The larger consideration is the development of initiative, responsibility and decision of character. Certainty of one's grasp of the details and fundamentals of a subject is essential to successful work. An instrument which aids in these aspects of study or labor gives one self-assurance in the performance of his task. The motion picture serves all these interests. It portrays with impressiveness the symmetry and beauty of all organized forms of life. It unconsciously cultivates an appreciation of the artistic. It is not only practical in its service, but it adds refinement to the intellectual fiber. It affords opportunity for training in the profitable use of leisure. The motion picture, therefore, is capable of being made an agency of incalculable value as a cultural influence.



EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of Exceptional and Honorable

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang

Adapted from the novel of Robert E. Burns by Sheridan Gibney and Brown Holmes, directed by Mervyn LeRoy, photographed by Sol Polito. Produced and distributed by Warner Bros.

The Cast

James Allen, a convict.....Paul Muni
Marie, his wife.....Glenda Farrell
Helen, the woman he loves.....Helen Vinson
The Warden.....David Landau
The Judge.....Berton Churchill

IN this visual recounting of the case history of a boy—a boy returned from the war, feeling himself changed and out of key in a world changed too, leaving home, going on his own to struggle and fit himself to the new scheme of things, finding work scarce, traveling here and there to get a job, going broke and, innocently getting caught in a lunch-wagon hold-up, arrested, sentenced and sent to serve ten years in a chain gang, escaping, changing his name, and in another state, through his innate honesty and ability, winning a place of trust and respect in the community, then, through the cupidity and vengefulness of his wanton wife, discovered and re-arrested, surrendering himself to the state in which he was convicted, on the promise that he will be pardoned after serving ninety days, finding himself con-

demned to the chain-gang again, the prison keepers revenging themselves upon him because he had given the newspapers the story of chain-gang conditions, denied his pardon by the authorities, and, with the ghastly and hopeless knowledge that he is doomed to serve out his time, desperately making his escape again, and, broken with terror and despair, becoming a haunted fugitive from justice, skulking day and night, lost to his friends, the girl who loves him, and to society—in this film of social injustice, iniquity, and the grinding down of an unfortunate individual, a film so sincere, real, inevitable, compassionate, restrained, and moving, the American motion picture comes into its estate as a medium for expressing the forces of social behavior and corrective social thought, of performing the function which intelligent people have been saying it must perform if the screen is to realize its place as a serious art that uses

the dramatic materials of our national life and institutions, methods and problems, not thereby to surrender one tithe of its status as a great entertainment but in order to heighten that status by giving its art a social and more human meaning. Surely such people and those in the ranks of picture patrons as well, will perceive in this picture a conscience that calls for respect and a verity that lifts it to a high level of dramatic entertainment.

We have heard—and this de-

BULLETIN

1932

Exceptional

The Battle of Gallipoli
I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang
Mädchen in Uniform
A Nous la Liberté
Payment Deferred
Road to Life

Honorable Mention

Der Andere
Arrowsmith
As You Desire Me
A Bill of Divorcement
Bring 'Em Back Alive
Broken Lullaby
Elisabeth von Oesterreich
Golden Mountains
Grand Hotel
Der Raub der Mona Lisa
Zwei Menschen

partment in certain cases has agreed—that the Russian cinema has marked highwater in the creative achievement of motion pictures. If it has done this, it is because—granted that a properly conceived technique has fashioned it for extraordinary dynamic thrust and therefore effective compact—it has dealt intensely, imaginatively and provocatively with the material of human beings in relation to the social organism, with what happens to the souls of people, with what destroys or enlivens souls, with what society can do to souls through blindness or stupidity or selfishness or malice and sheer rage; it is because the Russian cinema, even when adulating and centering on a special cause, idea, or social scheme about which there is justifiable disagreement, has spurned the putty and paint, the prettiness and pretentiousness, preferred to follow uncompromisingly the bitter grain of life, and so remained authentic in theme and passionate in utterance. But with this film of bitter life before us, made in America, in Hollywood, praise be, there can be no hesitancy in saying that our picture producers, when they get the slant, the courage and the will, can turn out just as important films as can anyone, anywhere, in the world (as indeed—but often with too little proof—our producers have been contending all along). *I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang* proves the contention amply and is to be enthusiastically commended for its courage, artistic sincerity, dramatic vigor, high entertainment concept, and social message—the last a word we don't like, but have in all conscience to use.

And yet why not? It would be denying the full flavor of this powerful film to deny its earnestness and propaganda value. But what does that mean?—or does it mean that Hauptmann's "The Weavers," Ibsen's "Ghosts," Galsworthy's "Justice" are not excellent plays and superlative entertainment because they happen to deal with certain evils of society and do so convincingly and intentionally? Does it detract from a film, then, when it says something? *I Am A*

Fugitive From A Chain Gang says something—something about a human being foiled in finding his own expression, trying to go straight when fell circumstance says, "You have gone wrong," trying to remain human in a world that has turned inhuman, and in the end being overcome, as human beings are, by a nemesis—which in this case is only another name for man's ignorance, trickery and failure to save members of his own tribe from distress when he finds himself organized into a society whose tragedy it still is not to be able, while seeking the path to righteousness and justice, to pull up its roots from the swamp of man's old primitive intolerances and brutalities. The tragedy of a scrub-woman can be as great as the tragedy of Lady Macbeth, as Hauptmann, we believe, has said, and a man caught in a prison, trying to escape from it and failing to do so, can be as awakening to our sense of the unfortunate, terrible, pitiful, and therefore cleansing, as King Oedipus trying to escape the Furies. When a motion picture can make us feel and recognize this, it has not only said something, it is something.

In writing of such a film—with its links of strong, cinematically wrought episodes building to the chain that finally fastens James Allen to his fate forever, with its sparse and telling use of sound and dialogue which slowly gathers to a monotone like the silence of ended life, with its swift and eloquent photography, and the splendid, sincere acting that marks its players throughout—it goes without saying that its director, Mervyn LeRoy, its scenarists, Sheridan Gibney and Brown Holmes, the photographer, Sol Polito, the star, Paul Muni (a moving performance his, indeed) and the entire supporting cast, have royally contributed to the dignity and tragic beauty of the work as a whole. And then—the producing company is to be congratulated and applauded, for in deciding to make, and in making, *I Am A Fugitive From A Chain Gang*, it has performed a service in behalf of the dignity and meaning of the art of the American film.—W. A. B.

Payment Deferred

Adapted from Jeffrey F. Dell's play by Ernest Vadja and Claudine West, directed by Lothar Mendes, photographed by Merrit B. Gerstad. Produced and distributed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The Cast

William Marble.....	Charles Laughton
Annie Marble.....	Dorothy Peterson
Winnie Marble.....	Maureen O'Sullivan
Madame Collins.....	Veree Teasdale
James Medland.....	Ray Milland
Hammond.....	Billy Bevan

THE thing about this picture likely to strike most people most immediately is the acting of Charles Laughton. The favorite players in the films, and so of course the ones rated by the name of stars, are seldom remarkable actors, very rarely great actors. If we like them—and each of us has some that we like very much—it is enough if they appear in parts that fit their personalities in a story not too tiresome to sit through comfortably. We de-

mand of our favorites only that they be themselves. Only once in a great while do we find one who, as Stark Young puts it, really performs and portrays. "They have both the will and the technique to create roles. The role will be in terms of the actor himself, but will be a genuine role as well."

It may be a bit too soon to throw the the hat too high in the air over Charles Laughton, after seeing him in only two parts. But he is undoubtedly an arresting performer. He was the jealous, insane husband in *Devil and the Deep*—a melodrama that went to the length of wrecking a submarine, more for the sake of thrills, than because such a thing was what a husband, even an insane one, would have done out of jealousy. Yet within the limits imposed upon him by an all too preposterous plot, Mr. Laughton did create a character,



Charles Laughton and Dorothy Peterson in "Payment Deferred"

through sheer acting; and something of what he achieved could be easily measured by comparing him with the two other leading people in the picture, who were the same Gary Cooper and the same Tallulah Bankhead, inside and out, we are always seeing.

In *Payment Deferred* Mr. Laughton has the same outside—the same roundness of body and face, the same way of using his eyes and hands—but the inner man comes out as something quite different. Instead of the strutting, vain, hollowly good-fellowish naval officer of his previous film (the insanity element was partly the author's fabrication, done with words and acts to help the plot along, of which Mr. Laughton had to make the best he could: but it was like having to use one poor quality of color in his otherwise excellent palette) he is here an essentially timid and cringing bank clerk, blustering when he dares, wanting to swagger, petulant and blubbing in the bosom of his family: an ungrownup man who somehow kept his adolescence in his middle age but who might have been a harmless and even decent citizen but for the eternally harrying worry about money enough to keep his family going. With no troubles he might have been an amiable non-entity, pottering about with his amateur photography, loved by his wife and unhated by his daughter, and unheard of by the world.

Mr. Laughton has embodied this character by elaborating a complete total conception with infinitely careful detail, in which even so small an item as buttoning his coat has its eloquent little place. He is helped of course by the fact that the part is there for him to take and shape and fill out: written with the kind of meticulous thoroughness so characteristic of Arnold Bennett. And the part is the center of an interesting story, of murder and punishment.

This harmless, bewildered little man, desperate in his teapot way for money, finds himself facing a chance to get money by committing a murder. He does it, timor-

ously, as it happens with no risk of being found out, makes a lucky investment that gives him a small fortune, and there he is with everything he wants and that haunting body buried in the backyard. But he is always in a little panic—retribution is working in his eternal terror of being found out; and the deferred punishment comes in a rather tricky ending when he pays for something in which he intentionally had no hand whatever.

It is a somewhat sordid play, with little dignity, which fails to attain the impressive stature of tragedy: always there is a faintly soggy aroma about it as of boiled mutton or cabbage, instead of the clean, cutting sweep of inevitable fate. It is pathetic rather than tragic. But by comparison with most films in the ordinary run of picture-making it stands up pretty high.

There is a generally competent air about the whole production, though none of the other actors are in a class with Mr. Laughton. Dorothy Peterson repeats the sweetly mild portrait of a gentle wife and mother she has given so often, and Maureen O'Sullivan also repeats her exhibition of Maureen O'Sullivan. None of them acts, in the sense that Charles Laughton acts. His performance, so carefully planned and expertly executed, so consistent, so seldom marred by extravagance or monotony, puts him in a class with the German Kortner, Jannings and Kraus, at their frequent best, and with the American Barrymores at their best not so frequent. He is an actor, in the deliberately creative sense, and not merely a personality.—J. S. H.

PAUL GREEN, the playwright who went to Hollywood to work on the screen adaptation of Richard Barthelmess's picture *Cabin in the Cotton*, has been quoted as saying, "Motion pictures represent the great and final blend of industry and the arts, of all the industries and all the arts, really, for they offer possibilities of embracing them all."



A Bill of Divorcement

Adapted from Clemence Dane's play by Howard Estabrook and Harry Wagstaff Gribble, directed by George Cukor, photographed by Sid Hickox. Produced and distributed by RKO-Radio.

The Cast

Hilary	John Barrymore
Margaret	Billie Burke
Sydney	Katharine Hepburn
Aunt Hester	Elizabeth Patterson
Kit	David Manners
Gray Meredith	Paul Cavanagh
Dr. Alliot	Henry Stephenson

THIS film has some of the virtues and some of the faults of having been what used to be called a "well-made" play. It is concentrated and well-knit, attending more or less strictly to the business of its dramatic situation without pictorial excursions outside its immediate circle of action—what needs to be explained gets an economical exposition through the dialogue, after the model perfected by Ibsen. That of course puts it into the class of films that film critics are still in dispute about:

is it too much talkie to be good movie? The esthetic principles derived from the silent films—for naturally principles have to be extracted from examples of them in operation—arranged themselves into a definition of "cinematic" that had no room to contain the talking picture. Eventually the use of a certain kind of "sound" was admitted to be esthetically permissible—the kind of sound we always had in the musical accompaniments and off-screen noises of galloping horses, rattling of musketry and what not, even human voices if they swung easily into the flow of action and did not switch the attention from the eyes to the ears. But that obviously does not include most of the pictures that are made nowadays. Dialogue remains an indigestible ingredient to most devotees of pure cinema—and what shall they do? Go on a hunger strike? A brave and stubborn proceeding that will provide many more evenings at home, where they might well reflect that

the camera and the phonograph are both machines—that many things both entertaining and dramatic can be communicated only by the human voice—that the mechanical reproduction of spoken words is no more “impure” than the mechanical reproduction of the lights and shadows of a lovely landscape—and finally that the medium which combines these two mechanical devices is irrevocably with us, groping its way in the fashion of any young medium, and that a less arbitrary and perhaps more basic set of esthetic principles are sure to reveal themselves as it gets more definitely into its own special stride.

Unless, then, you consider that the story of *A Bill of Divorcement*, requiring more dialogue than movement to put itself over effectively, is quite unsuited to the screen, we have here a pretty good talkie. It talks rather more than necessary, but it talks well—almost self-consciously well. It deals with a problem that has a good deal of emotional vitality in it, and therefore drama: whether a family strain that contains the germs of insanity should go on prolonging itself. The question of how much insanity is scientifically recognized as inheritable has little to do with the dramatic values of a situation in which the people are confronted by the heart-breaking duty of deciding what, in the light of their own experience, they should do about that question in their own personal lives. *A Bill of Divorcement* presents a man recovering from a fifteen years' stay in an asylum, during which his wife has divorced him, and a daughter on the verge of a happy marriage, suddenly faced with the knowledge of what may be in her blood. It is a play with no villain except fate and the mischances of human health—everyone is “right” and blameless, and rightness opposes rightness in a moving struggle to get the right thing done. It resolves itself as happily as any such situation very well could, and leaves most of the audience with the glowing feeling that the human soul is capable of unselfish nobility.

The production does not always meet one's demands of perfection. To establish an English atmosphere—an unnecessary effort, since the story would be just as interesting whether laid in England or Timbuktú, and the cast are ineradicably American anyway—the director has opened his picture with an attempt to show an English Christmas, with results that are downright bogus. And to clinch the impression that the father and daughter eventually find a happy companionship together, the end of the film shows them at a piano pounding away at a so-called sonata, providing a spurious and very noisy uplift for the finale that almost destroys the note of rich tenderness on which the picture should have stopped. But between this bad beginning and worse ending there is moving and often powerful drama, acted capably or better. Elizabeth Patterson is in the background, but she provides the definite solid convincingness that a good background should have. Paul Cavanagh and David Manners are agreeable and necessary adjuncts to the plot. Billie Burke is entirely and charmingly merely Billie Burke, acting—and looking—in the way that enraptured college boys twenty-five years ago. John Barrymore, finally “acting his age,” appears in that manifestation of the Barrymore manner that is most often evident in the performances of his brother Lionel, with a restraint and eloquence that make this character the best serious thing he has presented on the screen. A young and new actress, Katharine Hepburn, has the luck to have been given the part of the daughter for her first appearance in films, and the gift to make that part glow with life and beauty, a life and beauty that does not come from mere appearance but from the direct projection of an inner nature.

The playing of these actors rounds itself into a whole that the director has made harmonious and convincing. And

(Continued on page 19)

Picture Cycles

WE are always having them, these runs of certain story formulas on the screen, like—to take this season only—the Hollywood cycle, from *Hollywood Speaks* and *What Price Hollywood*, with a local color daubed on thick in the hope of being taken for realism, to the slapstick of the Lloyd-Mertonish *Movie Crazy* and the hilarious satire of *Once in a Lifetime*; the keyhole-reporter cycle: *Is My Face Red* and *Blessed Event* et cetera; the radio cycle, with *Crooner* and *The Big Broadcast*. Now the winter seems to have in store a series that deals, on the surface at least, with social problems of serious import, of which the first to arrive are *Hell's Highway* and *Cabin in the Cotton*.

Hell's Highway, a forerunner of *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, and *20,000 Years in Sing Sing*, bridges the gap between the hell cycle and the convict cycle. It is about a chain gang, obviously prompted by the case of the sweat-box atrocity in a prison camp that still reverberates occasionally in the day's news. Its subject ought to have given it a good deal of strength, of which Rowland Brown could have made much in his directing, but the producers seem to have hesitated about being too gruesome, with inevitable results. A relentless exposure of brutality to convicts, when politics has its itching fingers in the product of convict labor, might have been something worth making: it might even have had a rousing effect on the public conscience. But once a film lets itself be suspected of being just another movie story, all the social wrongs it shows, however truthfully, lose their force as actualities and become, in the onlooker's mind, just another brand of movie villainy. *Hell's Highway* (the fakiness of the title indicates the lack of sincerity behind the picture) does not quite yield to the temptation to lighten the seriousness of its subject by dragging in a love story and so-called sex interest, but it

goes just as fatally in a similar direction by putting in a youthful brother and a tearful mother for the hero, wrenching the interest from a serious and powerful portrayal of human wrong to a commonplace melodrama of self-sacrifice and sentimentality. The directorial hand of Rowland Brown, often visible in excellent management of characters and scenes, is powerless to hide the lack of forthright intention behind the story.

Cabin in the Cotton is much more courageous and straightforward, but it has its weaknesses. It concerns the laborers and the hirers of labor on cotton plantations, and tries valiantly to be fair to both sides. In holding the scales so impartially, however, it ends by leaving the problem about where it began with it, with the moral "Stop fighting and work together!"—an excellent moral, too, if it could be given force enough to be impressive. Unfortunately the hero is sadly and inexplicably unheroic: in attempting to be on both sides he misses taking any strong stand whatever, and this weakness of his—it is a serious weakness, dramatically—is tremendously emphasized by his shifting back and forth between the two girls of the story. If he was so uncertain about his affections, it is only too probable that he was not to be taken too seriously in his feelings about labor exploitation. This element of indecision, inherent in the character, is made only too apparent by the playing of Richard Barthelmess, who for all his earnestness no longer has the boyish quality that can sometimes be substituted for strength in an appealing characterization, so that he is neither a bewildered boy nor a man torn by deeply conflicting sympathies. He lets the story down very perceptibly.

It would seem that the movies need something more than good intentions and courage in tackling our social problems: they need unusual minds, all the way from the writing of the story to the casting of the actors. —J. S. H.

A Course in the Motion Picture Art

ON the first Monday in October there began at the New School for Social Research, 66 West 12th Street, New York City, an unusual series of lectures that will make up what is probably the first course of its kind in this country: a critical presentation of the cinema—its history, its future; its social basis, its esthetic evolution; its forms and categories; its critical literature, et cetera. The lectures are being given by Harry Alan Potamkin, of the Exceptional Photoplays Committee; a student and critic of the cinema who combines a wide and thorough knowledge of motion pictures, old and new and of all countries, with a profound understanding of people, so that to him the art of the screen is not only a live art, but one connected intimately with human living. His lectures are accompanied by illustrative film excerpts and other descriptive accessories, as well as by talks by important representatives of film bodies and activities. Those who have missed the opening lectures can still hear the rest of the course, which follows this outline:

1. The I's of the Movie: Inventor, Investor, Impressario, Imperialist . . . the relation of the mechanism to the art; economic organization; showmanship — the movie ritual; the international arena. The film as merchandise, purveyor of other merchandise, vendor of the national idea, instrument of colonial control.

2. First Statements and First Principles . . . the primitive cinema; the advent of the director; the intrusion of the star; the perfection of the scenario; the progress of cinematography; montage.

3. The Compound Cinema . . . music and the movie; sound; speech; variable screen; stereoscopy; color; tactilism; olfactory cinema; television.

4. Social Energies and the National Film . . . the first triangular competition: Denmark, France, U. S. A.; the film in

Britain; "the Latin Cinema"; the German "golden age"; the Swedish peak; Japan; the Russian film—czarist, Soviet, emigré; minority cinemas.

5. The Prestige of the American Film . . . its growth; influence; influence of other cinemas upon it; its present status.

6. Pivotal Films: a Critical Analysis . . . *Intolerance*; *Caligari*—date or milestone?; *A Woman of Paris*; *Potemkin*; *Arsenal*; *Front Page*, et cetera.

7. Presentation of a major silent film . . . with preliminary and concluding comments.

8. Hollywood or Lenin Hills? . . . the coming of the Soviet film, its world prestige, problems, future developments.

9. Censorship: the Control of the Film . . . censorship here and abroad; censorship local, national or at the production-distribution source; the church; selection not censorship—National Board of Review.

10. The Humorous Film . . . slapstick or "churlish" humor; worldly farce; comedy; satire; Sennett, Chaplin, Langdon, Ray Griffith; René Clair and rhetoric; Popov, Protazanov and others in the U. S. S. R.

11. The Animated Film . . . its origins; the American animation (cartoon or "funny"); Japanese rice-paper; German silhouette; French entr'acte; puppet films; abstract animations; Soviet multiplication-films.

12. Presentation of a major talking film with preliminary and concluding remarks.

Life and Lillian Gish

By ALBERT BIGELOW PAINE

Reviewed by James Shelley Hamilton

THE screen has had only one glimpse of Lillian Gish since the talkies came along, in that not happy advised transcription of Molnar's play, "The Swan," which Hollywood called *One Romantic Night*. She has chosen, it appears, to do her talking on the stage, and the motion picture has lost one of its "world's darling"s—a phrase used more than once by Mr. Paine.

So, since the career is over that made her what Vanity Fair's captionist called "The First Lady of the Screen," it is perhaps time for a record of that career. The biographer of Mark Twain and Joan of Arc has written it, with a lyric enthusiasm that might well stand as a model for fan magazine writers for many a day.

In it one may read of Miss Gish from 1896 to 1932, from Springfield, Ohio, to Beekman Terrace, New York City, from the stage work "In Convict Stripes" to "Camille," and the intervening screen career. Of the historic days of Griffith and Biograph, of that Golden Age in California when "those wholesome, beautiful girls and those strong, handsome young men" were "all busy at a work which brought cheer and comfort to the millions." Of Lillian's rise from five dollars a day to nearly half a million a year, and the long list of screen triumphs that began with *The Birth of a Nation* and ended only when the sudden success of Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer* turned movies into talkies and ruined the plan for Max Reinhardt to direct her in "The Miracle Girl of Konnersreuth." (Incidentally the misstatement that Reinhardt had never made a picture is repeated.)

In it is many an interesting item. Such as what Griffith called "the one original bit of business that has been introduced into the art of screen acting"—the famous smile in *Broken Blossoms*, which was Lillian's own inspiration. And how she risked pneumonia on a cake of ice in *Way Down East*. And how King Vidor thought she had really died in *La Bohème*. There is the record of her intellectuality: her omnivorous reading, how she became the dream girl of the intelligentsia, with tributes from James Branch Cabell and Joseph Hergesheimer and George Jean Nathan; of her Récamier salon, and of her wit: her remark about the Guild Theatre. Of her visits to the Pope, and how she finally managed to find time to see Duse, with whom admirers had compared her.

Of course the really adequate book has yet to be written about that twentieth cen-

tury phenomenon, the movie star: America's royalty. But Mr. Paine's adulatory volume has one particularly remarkable quality: in it any reader can find substantial ground for whatever he has previously thought about Lillian Gish. And perhaps about life.

The Macmillan Company, Publishers, \$3.50.

Experiment in Photoplay Appreciation

TO measure growth in critical appreciation of photoplays among boys and girls in high schools, with a view to developing higher standards in this field, a rather extensive experiment is planned for the academic year of 1932-33 by the National Council of Teachers of English.

The steering committee in charge of the project desires the cooperation of heads of English departments who are interested in this new development.

Following is a suggestive outline of the procedure contemplated:

1. To set up, in various cities, experimental groups of students who will receive guidance in photoplay appreciation and control groups who will receive no guidance in this field.
2. To enlist the cooperation of local exhibitors, so that both the experimental groups and the control groups and their teachers may see pictures regularly without charge during the experimental period.
3. To set up as a criterion a selection of the best pictures among those seen during the experiment. This is to be determined by a ballot of the English teachers and the committees of the National Council involved in the experiment.
4. To let the experimental and control groups vote on the best pictures in the same list, in order to compare differences in taste with the criterion ballot, using the rank-difference method of correlation and other accepted statistical techniques.

If you are interested in this, write to the chairman, Mr. William Lewin, Central High School, Newark, New Jersey.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

A Movie Survey Among the Young

THE Junior Review Committee work of Better Films groups is going to receive increasing attention this year. The young people have in many places been organized and are ready to tell the older people what they think of present day motion pictures and what they would like to see in future pictures. But many groups are saying how can we go about getting this information so it can be helpfully useful. A solution to this question may be offered in a school plan interestingly detailed in a summer issue of Motion Picture Reviews, of the Los Angeles branch of the American Association of University Women, by Miss Lois Smyth, pupil of grade A12, Abraham Lincoln High School, Los Angeles. With that thought in mind we are pleased to reprint it here in the following paragraphs.

A movie survey which was made this semester of 1400 students, who ranged from the 7th to 12th grades, has proved to be one of the most interesting projects ever undertaken by the Daily Railsplitter of Lincoln High School of Los Angeles. For more than a year previous to the survey, the Railsplitter had printed resumés of the movie reviews which are published monthly in pamphlet form by the Los Angeles Women's University Club and the D. A. R. It was agreed that the critics who wrote the reviews recommended for adolescents movies that were very much worth while. However, interest was aroused in what the students themselves preferred, whether their choice of movies was good enough to make unnecessary the more strict motion picture censorship which women's clubs are advocating all over the country.

Ideas formulated into actions. Sheets of paper were mimeographed and passed to the

home-room teachers. The sheets were entitled, "What kind of movies do you prefer?" and asked for the following information from each individual student: initials (to assure an authentic vote), sex, grade, and choice of movies (name of movie, star, or type of picture). No definite answer was required of the boys and girls, as the idea of the survey was to obtain statements from them which would best express their true opinion of their motion picture entertainment. Some of the results proved to be so interesting that it was decided to extend part of the investigation to a few of the nearby grammar schools. And so, with the kind cooperation of their principals and teachers, the 7th and 8th grade pupils of three schools were questioned as to how often they attended the movies and what kind they liked best, we were greatly interested when each school handed in widely different results.

The one in which most of the students have American-born parents, had the following conclusions: one boy never went to the movies, 8 went seldom, 8 went once in two weeks, 26 went once a week, and 15 went two to six times a week. Of these boys, 20 preferred war pictures, 18 comedy, 17 western, 1 gangster, and not even one vote was cast for romance. In the same school, 3 girls never went to the show, 11 but seldom, 8 once in two weeks, 25 once a week, and 10 went at least two times a week. Of them, 18 liked comedy pictures the best, 15 western, 8 love films, 5 gangster, and 4 war. The teacher who was in charge of the survey stated: "The girls who do prefer romance I know to be older than the rest. Not only are they old enough to be in high school, but most of them have nothing else to think about."

In another of the schools nearly all the students have foreign-born parents. Three

of these girls said they never went to pictures, 6 went seldom, 3 once in two weeks, 18 once a week, and 13 twice a week or more. They preferred romance to all others, giving it 19 votes and its nearest competitor but 9. Of the boys, 1 never attended the movies, 6 went but seldom, 4 once in two weeks, 13 once a week, and 12 twice a week or more. They seemed to prefer gangster and western films, giving them 14 and 12 votes respectively, while comedy which was third highest, received only 6 votes.

The children of American-born parents are about evenly divided in the third school with those of foreign-born parentage. Eight of these boys seldom went to the movies, 2 went once in two weeks, 26 went once a week, and 20 went twice a week at least. When 23 of them did go they hoped to see a war picture, while 12 preferred gangsters, making it second in popularity. Sixteen of the girls attended the motion pictures only seldom, 2 went once in two weeks, 26 went once a week, and 15 went two or more times a week. Here, romance also claimed first place with 24 votes and comedy came in second with 14. In totaling the girls, 38 went two or more times a week, 64 went once a week, 13 once every two weeks, 33 seldom, and 6 never attended picture shows. They preferred romance above all else, giving it 51 votes, comedy 35, western 28, gangster 14, tragedy 11, and war 7. The total of the boys shows that 47 saw a picture at least twice a week, 65 once a week, 4 once in two weeks, 22 but seldom, and 2 never went. Forty-three chose war pictures, 37 gangster, 35 western, 31 comedy, 7 tragedy, and 6 romance.

Perhaps the most serious result found in the above figures is the preference for gangster films found among boys. Not only are these films found to be largely worthless, but an evil, in that they give a glamorous and romantic touch to the sordid life of the gangsters. In fact, they become quite a problem when they appeal to poor youngsters of an impressionable age. For in-

stance, one little boy said he preferred gangster pictures, and when asked how often he went to the movies, made the plaintive reply, "Whenever I get 35c, and that isn't very often."

As for the girls in high school, they also liked to see a romance movie, giving it 147 votes, while 58 were cast for mystery, 52 for comedy, 51 for tragedy, 42 for western, 23 for college, 16 for sports, 14 for war, and 12 for modern. There were also numerous other types that were barely more than mentioned. In a fight for popularity with the boys, comedy finally won over war, with but 1 extra vote to its credit, while aviation came third, mystery fourth, western fifth, gangster sixth, sports seventh, adventure eighth, and romance ninth. Many other types were also voted upon, but received less than 15 votes.

The Spirit of Notre Dame was the most popular picture with both the boys and girls. The latter chose *Daddy Long Legs* as a close second, and the boys made *Dirigible* and *Four Horsemen* their second and third favorites.

A rather singular fact was disclosed when it was discovered that the girls preferred women stars and the boys preferred men. Janet Gaynor won first place in the girls' estimation with 75 votes, while Joan Crawford received 58, Nancy Carroll 32, Norma Shearer 28, Greta Garbo 23, Constance Bennett 21, Clara Bow 11, Marie Dressler 8, Barbara Stanwyck 8, and Polly Moran 6. The girls also cast 39 ballots for Robert Montgomery, 32 for Clark Gable, 27 for Charles Farrell, 19 for Lew Ayres, 18 for Buddy Rogers, 16 for Gary Cooper, and 15 for Will Rogers.

The boys did not mention the stars as often as the girls, but those who did preferred Joe E. Brown. The rest are popular according to the following order: Laurel and Hardy, Lew Ayres, Jack Holt, Edward G. Robinson, Wallace Beery, Harry Carey, and Tom Mix. Very few of the boys chose a woman star as their favorite, Norma

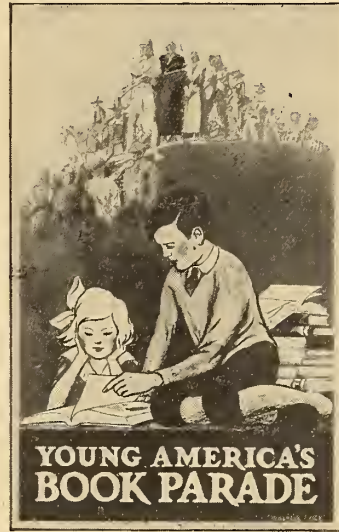
Shearer and Janet Gaynor tied for first place with just 6 votes apiece, Joan Crawford came next with 4 votes, and Sylvia Sydney came third with only 2 votes.

Book Films for Book Week

CURRENT reports from motion picture exhibitors and from book dealers and libraries show that as a result of the present day state of the family pocketbook the matter of spending leisure hours has changed somewhat. People are going to motion picture theatres with more discrimination, wanting to be assured that they get the most return in good film entertainment for the money spent, and they are reading more. This increases the interest in book-film tie-ups as many of the better films are adapted from books or plays and many other good ones, because of their presentation of problems of the day, have distinct book connections. There will undoubtedly be a special interest therefore on the part of libraries, schools, theatres and Better Films Councils in working out cooperative plans for the observance of Book Week. This annual occasion, sponsored by the National Association of Book Publishers, comes this year on the dates November 13th-19th. The National Board of Review, as for the past ten years, has compiled a list of Selected Book-Films. It lists 162 selected films adapted from published sources or distinctly related to reading for use during Book Week and for year-around book-film tie-ups.

The list includes films for the mature audience, the family audience and the junior audience. From this latter group pictures can be chosen for the special matinees which always have a part in community book-film plans. Book week is being centered this year on the theme "Books for Young America," and so the junior films will have a special place in programs at that time.

A comment from the Committee on Children's Reading of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection is



*Book
Week
Poster
of the
Book
Publisher's
Association*

particularly appropriate in this connection. It says, "Children . . . prefer attendance at the 'movies' to all other recreational activities. But the local showing of a film based on a book or related to books frequently sends children to the libraries, sometimes on their way home from the 'movie' theatre. Because of this, many libraries cooperate with local exhibitors in giving publicity to any good film based on a good book. It is the belief of many students of adolescent reading that methods of elevating the reading tastes of junior high school and elementary school pupils will be more effective if the attempt is made first to direct interest in motion pictures. Careful experimental work indicates that better results are obtained when the child is told what to look for in the 'movie' than when attempts are made to censor the films he sees."

This gives all of us interested in community better films activity with children a double goal for by directing children's interest to good motion pictures we are cultivating also good taste in reading.

(Continued from page 13)

the picture, being so serious and sincere in its material and so ably handled, belongs definitely among the films that are more than just good entertainment.—J.S.H.

National Association of Community Theatres

A critic of the cinema in discussing where the motion picture fails, has said, "The motion picture caters to mass production and wholesale consumption of its product. To be financially successful a picture must be exhibited and expected to appeal to millions of widely assorted persons the country over. The same film must please the social leader, the chambermaid, the scientist and his ten year old son."

Realizing that such a thought is not confined to one critic but is shared by many possible theatre patrons the National Association of Community Theatres has been organized to put into action interesting and radically new principles in the operation of motion picture theatres.

The average community theatre, they say, hopes to draw for its patronage upon a cross section of the community each day in the week. The N. A. C. Theatres will cater to the special tastes of different groups on certain days and at certain hours. This means dedicating each theatre to serving everybody in the community. Each town or community being of heterogeneous character, there are various tastes, occupations and racial backgrounds, as well as the varied preferences of adults, adolescents and children.

The selection of feature pictures and building of programs will be based upon a study of the population of the town or community. The advice of leaders in all local activities, civic and social, will be sought. Programs will then be rotated and varied to meet the desires of all groups large enough in number to constitute an audience. Each theatre will be available for the use of schools, clubs, churches and drama leagues, and will cooperate in drives or campaigns, and with technical or industrial groups.

The emphasis upon community interests does not mean that these theatres aim to

show only "high brow" or educational films. They will concentrate upon entertainment and uniformly high standards, with the programs kept free of unworthy or objectionable films. Whether it be comedy, drama, romance, westerns, mystery or adventure—all will be included if desired. The very flexible schedule will permit morning showings of special technical or educational interest, children's matinees, as well as family weekend pictures.

This undertaking is a pioneering effort reaching courageously out into a new era of distinction in motion picture offerings and its sponsors believe that it will serve as a challenge to those who have sharply criticized the motion picture industry.

If you wish to know more of this plan as it might be carried out in your community information can be secured from Mrs. Marguerite Benson, Director of Public Relations of this National Association of Community Theatres, 545 Fifth Ave., New York City.

Showings for Children

WHAT is New York City doing for its thousands and thousands of children in the way of motion picture entertainment? Are the family weekend programs and junior matinees of smaller communities overlooked in the "big city" where premieres and Broadway runs hold the major attention? The answer is "No." And to prove it here is one instance of what is being done which we saw for ourselves when we took a young six-year-old to see her third movie last Saturday morning.

It was one of the Children's Matinees conducted in the Lenox Little Theatre located in the Lenox School, a private school on East 78th Street in New York City. Here we find a charming little theatre and although it is in a school it breathes nothing of the atmosphere of a school auditorium.

The picture this particular morning was the favorite *Rango*, all the children seemed to like it from their audible comments. My

young companion said she liked it best when little Rango "pounded on the floor with his fists" that is when he is captured by young Ali after boldly entering his jungle home. She also liked the water buffalo for although he was big he was gentle and friendly to Ali and not like the tigers. In addition to *Rango* the program included, of course, a Mickey Mouse this one where he acts in the *Grocer Boy* and later at luncheon it was pointed out to me that the chocolate cake was "just like the one Minnie Mouse made." Did that take our appetites—no, indeed, it helped.

Sponsors of the matinees are Clara S. Littledale, Editor, Parents' Magazine; Sidonie M. Gruenberg, Director, Child Study Association; Jessica Cosgrave, Finch School; Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Todhunter School; Mrs. H. H. Beers, Editor, Horace Mann School Bulletin, and others. The matinees are held every Friday afternoon with continuous shows from 2 to 5 and every Saturday continuous from 11 to 5. The new season began on September 30th and the pictures shown to date and forthcoming are: *Tarzan the Apeman*, *When a Feller Needs a Friend*, *The Tenderfoot*, *Rango*, *Make Me a Star*, *Igloo*, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, *Tom Brown of Culver*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Tom Sawyer* and *Skippy*.

The Lenox Little Theatre does not limit itself to children's programs but provides adult entertainment also in the showing of mature pictures twice nightly every day in the week and continuous from 2 o'clock Sunday afternoon. The same picture is not shown on Friday and Saturday nights as is shown during the children's matinees on these days but different pictures are booked appealing to the different tastes of the two audiences. No advertising of coming attractions is shown at any of these programs.

While this is a specialized little theatre still the idea can and is in many places worked out successfully with the interested cooperation of the exhibitors in the larger more general theatre.

Another recent New York City film plan

for children was that of "Juvenile Day" arranged by United Artists on two Saturdays at the Rivoli Theatre on Broadway during the run of Douglas Fairbanks' latest picture *Mr. Robinson Crusoe*. At this time the picture was available to children for the entire day at a special rate, through contacts established with various social and religious groups. One thousand ministers, 500 public schools, 300 Y. M. C. A. groups, 1,000 parochial schools and a similar number of leaders of women's clubs were notified, in addition to boy and girl scout associations. This was done by letter and through radio broadcasts.

The Little Picture House, New York City's unusual cinema theatre which is unique in ownership and in manner of selective program presentations, is to have a special screening for children on the Saturday morning following Thanksgiving and then at holiday time there will be showings every morning between Christmas and New Years to provide the children with special vacation entertainment. Later word will be given of the films to be shown at that time. The director of the theatre tells us she finds the holiday programs particularly successful.

A new community organization for the support of good films from which much effective work may be expected during the coming season was formed recently following a meeting of representatives of social welfare organizations, civic groups, the Board of Education and the Federation of Churches, to consider means of encouraging higher type pictures for juvenile audiences. This organization called the Hartford (Conn.) Cinema Club has as its aims "to bring the better movies to the attention of the public, to encourage the exhibition of the family type of pictures on week-ends, and to sponsor special productions of children's pictures when possible."

Mrs. Helen S. MacPherson, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer of Hartford, was named president of the Club, other officers represent

the Parent-Teacher Association, Northwest Child Welfare Committee, and the St. Francis Hospital Auxiliary. At the initial meeting exhibitors were invited and offered their cooperation, particularly in special shows for young people but these they said, must be supported if they are to be continued. This support will undoubtedly be forthcoming with a united group back of the plan. The Club plans to keep us informed of its activities and these we will pass on to you as your activities are passed on to others through this Magazine.

This organization will have fine leadership in Mrs. MacPherson who is highly trained and experienced in special work with children. She addressed the last annual conference of the National Board on the subject of "Children and the Motion Picture" and a report of this address appeared in the March, 1932, issue of this Magazine.

IT is not the size of a community that determines the effectiveness of its better films activity. The plan for the encouragement of the good pictures through organized community effort is adaptable to city and village. Cooperation, discrimination and all the points of such a plan can be made to fit the local need. An example of the work in a small community which took pattern from a larger one is that in Dansville, N. Y., neighboring to the city of Rochester from which the incentive came.

We quote from a letter from Miss Ruth Sandford of the Committee, telling of the activity of the past season. "It was on the initiative of the D. A. R. Committee that the Woman's Club and the Parent-Teacher Association were interested in appointing members on a common committee. Each of these organizations appoint two members, making a committee of six. These members take turns, a month at a time usually, in going over the various reports sent, and publishing outlines and recommendations of the pictures of the week in our village papers. In the little daily this report appears on Monday and in the weekly, which comes out

on Thursday morning, it covers Thursday to Thursday. The proprietor of our local theatre—we have but one—gives us his schedule about a month in advance. Beginning with March 1, 1931, we have published these reports continuously with the exception of two or three weeks last summer. People say that the quality of pictures shown is improving. I find that more and more people watch for and read the reports which are published under our Committee's name, since they provide a non-commercial opinion.

"An outgrowth of our Committee's work was a series of children's matinees, sponsored by the Parent-Teacher Association during the past spring, putting six specially good children's pictures in the reach of children at 10c admission and in the afternoons—we were able to get *Skippy*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Sooky*, et cetera, for these showings, through a special arrangement with the Buffalo Paramount office."

NOW that school days are once more with us teachers and pupils are looking for new interests and new methods for arousing old interests, the National Committee of Boys and Girls Club Work offers to persons interested a very entertaining and educational two reel silent picture for free distribution, with the exception, of course, of transportation. The film is entitled *4-H Club Tour to Shrines of American History* and is a day by day diary of the reactions of four girls to the scenes visualized in the picture. Among the historic places visited are Barbara Frietchie's home in Frederick, Md., all the meccas of America-loving citizens in Washington, the famous old Virginia towns of Alexandria, Fredericksburg, Charlottesville, Richmond and Williamsburg, which has been restored to its pre-Revolutionary days. More detailed information can be learned by writing to Mr. G. L. Noble, National Committee, Boys and Girls Club Work, 430 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago.

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIOUS INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

AFRAID TO TALK—From the play "Merry Go Round" by Albert Moltz and George Sklar, directed by Edward Cahn, with a cast including Eric Linden and Sidney Fox. Universal, 8 reels. Vastly interesting picture dealing with corrupt city officials. The locale is any large city and shows to what length politicians will go to keep their skirts clean in the public eye. *Mature audience.*

AIRMAIL—Screen story by Dale Van Every and Frank Wead, directed by John Ford, with a cast headed by Ralph Bellamy. Universal, 9 reels. An interesting and exciting story of the boys who fly the mail, which deals with the loves and hates in a desert airport. The flying is marvelous and the picture though long holds one's interest throughout. *Family audience.*

THE ALL AMERICAN—Screen story by Dale Van Every and Richard Schayer, directed by Russell Mack, with a cast including Richard Arlen, Jimmy Gleason and the 1931 All-American Team. Universal, 9 reels. A football story with a new twist and a remarkable list of real football stars playing in the games. *Family audience.*

THE AMAZON HEAD HUNTERS—Principal, 6 reels. The record of a trip to the head-hunting tribe in South America made by the Marquis de Wavrin. Interesting but in spots gruesome. *Mature audience.*

BETWEEN FIGHTING MEN—Screen story by Betty Burbridge and Forrest Sheldon, directed by Forrest Sheldon, with a cast headed by Ken Maynard. World Wide, 6 reels. A very entertaining Western with the usual ingredients—fine riding, much shooting and fighting—and some good comedy touches besides. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE BIG BROADCAST—From the play "Wild Waves" by William F. Manley, directed by Frank Tuttle, with a cast including Bing Crosby and Stuart Erwin. Paramount, 10 reels. Story of a broadcasting station with many of the popular radio stars doing their specialties. Bing Crosby, the big hit, quits and the station goes into bankruptcy but is saved by a boy from the West whom Bing befriended. *Family audience.*

THE BIG STAMPEDE—Screen story by Marion Jackson, directed by Tenny Wright, with a cast including John Wayne and Noah Beery. Warner, 5 reels. One of the classier Westerns, with a horse and a boy to please the juveniles. It concerns cattle robbers but has a good deal of novelty in its action. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

BLAME THE WOMAN—From the play "Diamond Cut Diamond" by Lord Castlerosse, directed by Fred Niblo, with a cast including Adolphe Menjou and Benita Hume. Principal, 8 reels. Cleverly written and acted story of a gentleman thief who blames his partner's fondness for the ladies for their failures until he falls for a charming young lady himself. A British production. *Mature audience.*

BREACH OF PROMISE—From the story "Obscurity" by Rupert Hughes, directed by Paul L. Stein, with a cast including Mae Clarke and Chester Morris. World Wide, 7 reels. A nicely acted and interestingly told story of a girl who ruins a young lawyer's promising future with a framed breach of promise suit. *Mature audience.*

***CABIN IN THE COTTON**—From the novel by Henry H. Knoll, directed by Michael Curtiz, with a cast headed by Richard Barthelmess. First National, 7 reels. A serious presentation, without offering a solution, of the planter-tenant problem in the cotton-growing South. Excellent in intention. People will like it according to their knowledge of Southern life and their partiality for Barthelmess. *Family audience.*

CONDEMNED TO DEATH—From the play "Jack O'Lantern" by George Goodchild, directed by Walter Forde, with a cast headed by

Arthur Wontner. First Division, 8 reels. The strange story of an executed criminal's post-mortem revenge on the judge who condemned him. Very well acted, and—granting its premises—effective. A British production. *Mature audience.*

THE CRUSADER—*From the play by Wilson Collison, directed by Frank Strayer, with a cast including Evelyn Brent, Lew Cody and H. B. Warner. Majestic, 7 reels.* A newspaper's hunt for a story which involves a scandal in a district attorney's family. Newspaper ethics in a conventional melodrama, with occasional amusing passages. *Mature audience.*

DASSAN, THE ISLE OF PENGUINS—*Directed by Mr. and Mrs. Cherry Kearton. First Division, 5 reels.* The island of Dassan, solely inhabited by penguins, visited by an Englishman who comments in Englishly humorous fashion on the amusing and interesting things he found there. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

FALSE FACES—*Screen story by Kubec Glasman, directed by Lowell Sherman, with a cast headed by Lowell Sherman. World Wide, 8 reels.* Story of a doctor who, forced to leave a New York hospital, goes to Chicago and sets out to make a fortune in plastic surgery. He is brought to trial over an operation but his plea to the jury is so convincing that he is acquitted, however he later gets what he deserves. *Mature audience.*

FARGO EXPRESS—*Screen story by Earle Snell, directed by Alan James, with a cast headed by Ken Maynard. World Wide, 6 reels.* An interesting Western with fine scenery and some excellent riding, about a man who takes the blame for a stage coach hold-up to protect the brother of the girl he loves. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

DAS FLOETENKONZERT VON SANS SOUCI (The Flute Concert of Sans Souci)—*Screen story by Walter Reisch, directed by Gustav Ucicky, with a cast including Otto Gebühr and Renate Müller. Protex, 9 reels.* A German historical picture of which Frederick the Great is the central figure. It deals with an episode culminating in a European confederation to wipe out Frederick's army. Lavishly produced and a fine example of Germany's vivid, if somewhat heavy, treatment of history on the screen. *Family audience. Suggested for schools and libraries.*

FORBIDDEN TRAIL—*Screen story and direction by Lambert Hillyer, with a cast headed by Buck Jones. Columbia, 7 reels.* A good Western story about a warfare between homesteaders and cattlemen. *Family audience.*

THE GOLDEN WEST—*From the novel by Zane Grey, directed by David Howard, with a cast headed by George O'Brien. Fox, 7 reels.* Story of the Golden West in the days of Indians and covered wagons. A family feud causes a young boy to leave his Kentucky home and not until twenty years later does the friction end. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

HEART PUNCH—*Story by Frank Howard Clark, directed by Breezy Eason, with a cast including Lloyd Hughes and Marion Schilling. Mayfair, 6 reels.* A good fast-moving story which will appeal to prize-fight fans. The hero gives up fighting when he causes the death of his pal with his heart punch but later, to raise money to save his pal's sister, accused of murder, he enters the ring again. *Family audience.*

HER MAD NIGHT—*Screen story by John Thomas Neville, directed by E. Mason Hopper, with a cast including Irene Rich and Conway Tearle. Mayfair, 6 reels.* Drama of a woman with a past who is confronted with it on the verge of a happy marriage. Tense moments for those who can believe in it and a new and interesting young actress, Mary Carlisle, as the daughter. *Mature audience.*

HERITAGE OF THE DESERT—*Novel by Zane Grey, directed by Henry Hathaway, with a cast including Randolph Scott and J. Farrell McDonald. Paramount, 7 reels.* Story of the West in 1890 with the usual riding and shooting combined with the love and hate interest. Well produced and should appeal to the entire family. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

HIDDEN VALLEY—*Screen story by Wellman Totman, directed by Robert N. Bradbury, with a cast headed by Bob Steele. Monogram, 5 reels.* A hunt for the hidden valley of the West leads the hero into many adventures with villains and wild Indians until he escapes in a blimp. Although the story is highly improbable there is excitement enough to forget that. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE KING MURDER—*Screen story by Charles Reed Jones, directed by Richard Thorpe, with a cast including Conway Tearle and Natalie Moorhead. Chesterfield, 7 reels.* A well constructed murder mystery which provides good entertainment all the way through. It concerns the murder of a notorious woman in which four men she knew are implicated. *Mature audience.*

KLONDIKE—*From the story by Tristram Tupper, directed by Phil Rosen, with a cast headed by Lyle Talbot. Monogram, 6 reels.* Good drama of a surgeon who has lost his standing, combined with fair melodrama and a certain novelty of plot. The noted flier, Captain Frank Hawks, has a part in the picture, which is laid in Alaska. *Family audience.*

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE—*Adapted from the comic strip by Harold Gray, directed by John Robertson, with a cast headed by Mitzi Green. RKO-Radio, 7 reels.* Little Orphan Annie gets her favorite orphan, Mickey, adopted but her secret visit to him in his new home causes a near tragedy. The picture has both humor and pathos. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

LOUISE KOENIGEN VON PREUSSEN (Louise, Queen of Prussia)—*From the novel "Luise" by Walter von Molo, directed by Carl Froelich, with a cast headed by Henny Porten. Associated Cinemas, 8 reels.* A handsome,

German historical picture, dealing with Prussia when, with its weak king, it was a buffer between Napoleon and the Russian czar. It has none of the excitement of battle and pageant but a lovely portrayal of the loveable queen. *Family audience. Suggested for schools and libraries.*

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN—From the story by Thomas Burtis, directed by Harry Joe Brown, with a cast headed by Jack Oakie. *Paramount, 8 reels.* Interesting and amusing story of prize-fighting centering around the great sports arena of that name. *Family audience.*

MEN ARE SUCH FOOLS—Screen story by Thomas Lennon, directed by William Nigh, with a cast headed by Leo Carrillo. *RKO-Radio, 8 reels.* The drama of a second violinist who composes beautiful music in prison where he is serving a sentence for killing his wife's lover. He is later released for his good behavior. *Mature audience.*

NIGHT AFTER NIGHT—From the story "Single Night" by Louis Bromfield, directed by Archie Mayo, with a cast including George Raft and Constance Cummings. *Paramount, 8 reels.* Highly entertaining and amusing story for the sophisticated audience. A night club proprietor's wooing of a Park Avenue girl. The acting of Alison Skipworth and Mae West are high spots in the production. *Mature audience.*

OUTLAW JUSTICE—Screen story by Scott Darling, directed by Armand Schaefer, with a cast headed by Jack Hoxie. *Majestic, 6 reels.* A good Western with the hero accused of killing the sheriff escaping with the aid of his horse, Dynamite, and discovering the real villains. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

PRIDE OF THE LEGION—From the story by Peter B. Kyne, directed by Ford Beebe, with a cast including Victor Jory and Barbara Kent. *Mascot, 8 reels.* An exciting story of the police and their troubles with a gang of racketeers. Interesting all the way through. *Mature audience.*

RACKETY RAX—From the novel by Joel Sayre, directed by Alfred Werker, with a cast headed by Victor McLaglen. *Fox, 6 reels.* Ribald satire, principally of the football racket, incidentally of gangsters and even movies. No subtlety but rough, hearty amusement. The plot concerns a high-powered gang that goes in for Varsity football during a reform administration that brings a lull in their ordinary activities. *Family audience.*

***RAIN**—From the story by Somerset Maugham, directed by Lewis Milestone, with a cast headed by Joan Crawford. *United Artists, 8 reels.* The well known drama of the tropics is again revived with Joan Crawford giving an excellent performance of "Sadie Thompson," the outcast girl whom a minister tried to regenerate. The whole cast is most satisfactory and the direction very good. *Mature audience.*

RED DUST—From the play by Wilson Collison, directed by Victor Fleming, with a cast includ-

ing Jean Harlow and Clark Gable. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels.* A colorful picture, the scene on a rubber plantation, of the love of a man for another man's wife. Jean Harlow is the comedy element, amusing and likeable in a bawdy way. *Mature audience.*

RED HAired ALIBI—From the story by Wilson Collison, directed by Christy Cabanne, with a cast including Merna Kenedy and Theodor von Eltz. *Tower, 7 reels.* Nicely acted and smoothly told story which is interesting throughout although a bit unconvincing at times. It concerns a small town girl who accepts an unusual position with a charming gentleman. *Mature audience.*

SCARLET DAWN—Screen story by Mary McCall, Jr., directed by William Dieterle, with a cast including Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. and Nancy Carroll. *Warner, 5 reels.* Entertaining picture of the Russian revolution. A Baron is forced to leave Russia and his servant goes with him. Later he falls in love with her and saves her from deportation. *Mature audience.*

***SIX HOURS TO LIVE**—From the story "Auf Wiedersehen" by Gordon Morris and Morton Bartaux, directed by William Dieterle, with a cast headed by Warner Baxter. *Fox, 7 reels.* A picture directed with unusual beauty and effectiveness, about an assassinated man who is brought back to life for six hours. A tense and eerie quality pervades the film, which is made plausible by sincere acting and genuine emotional effect. Some people will like it enormously, others not so much. *Family audience.*

***UN SOIR DE RAFLE** (The Night of the Raid)—Screen story by Henri Decoin, directed by Carmine Gallone, with a cast including Albert Prejean and Annabella. *Protex, 10 reels.* A superior French film, concerning the rise and fall of a boxer. Excellently acted and a remarkable picture of certain phases of Parisian life. *Family audience.*

THE SPORT PARADE—Screen story by Jerry Horwin, directed by Dudley Murphy, with a cast headed by Joel McCrea. *RKO-Radio, 7 reels.* Two boys, pals through college and champions of all sports, separate after graduation, one to make big money, the other going into the newspaper game. Finally the girl they both love bring them together again. *Family audience.*

STRANGE JUSTICE—Screen story by William A. Drake, directed by Victor Schertzinger, with a cast including Reginald Denny and Norman Foster. *RKO-Radio, 7 reels.* A carefully plotted and well acted story showing how circumstantial evidence can be manufactured—and the injustice of it in capital cases. *Family audience.*

THAT'S MY BOY—From the novel by Francis Wallace, directed by Roy William Neill, with a cast headed by Richard Cromwell. *Columbia, 7 reels.* A football star who gets into a football racket—a human picture with an implied criticism of the methods and the effect of money making at big games. The college at-

mosphere is better than usual in films. *Family audience.*

THEY CALL IT SIN—From the novel by Alberta S. Eagan, directed by Thornton Freeland, with a cast including Loretta Young and George Brent. *First National*, 5 reels. A country girl mixed up with a Broadway theatrical producer, ending in his death and the girl's marrying someone she was not expected to. What was called sin is not apparent. A pleasant cast in which Una Merkel provides some laughs. *Mature audience.*

THREE ON A MATCH—Screen story by Kubec Glasman and John Bright, directed by Merwyn LeRoy, with a cast including Ann Dvorak, Joan Blondell, Bette Davis and Warren William. *First National*, 6 reels. A story of three girls, from school days on, and the diversity of their lives. Rather crowded in plot, but lively and human and often exciting. An usual cast of excellent players. *Mature audience.*

***TROUBLE IN PARADISE**—From the play by Laszlo Aladar, directed by Ernst Lubitsch, with a cast including Herbert Marshall, Miriam Hopkins and Kay Francis. *Paramount*, 9 reels. A clever sophisticated farce comedy of two crooks who meet in romantic Venice, fall in love and work at their trade together. The acting of Herbert Marshall is excellent and Charles Ruggles is his usual clever self. *Mature audience.*

VANITY STREET—Screen story by Francis Cavert and Edward Roberts, directed by Nicholas Grinde, with a cast including Helen Chandler and Charles Bickford. *Columbia*, 7 reels. Romance of a detective and a chorus girl—familiar elements of plot, but a certain originality in the two main characters give it freshness and interest. *Mature audience.*

VIRGINS OF BALI—Directed by Deane Jackson. *Principal*, 5 reels. A charming record of the lives of two sisters on the island of Bali, combining the native life with a bit of romance. One of the best of the Bali films. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

VIRTUE—Screen story by Robert Riskin, directed by Eddie Buzzell, with a cast including Carole Lombard and Pat O'Brien. *Columbia*, 7 reels. Another story of a girl's troubles in living down her past, with a murder to help straighten things out, but it is lively and interesting, with human portrayals by the actors and brisk, engaging direction. *Mature audience.*

WASHINGTON MERRY GO ROUND—Screen story by Maxwell Anderson, directed by James Cruze, with a cast including Lee Tracy and Constance Cummings. *Columbia*, 8 reels. A melodrama of politics, in which a young congressman undertakes to clean out some of the evil controllers of legislation. Interesting but not to be confused with the book of the same name. *Family audience.*

WHITE EAGLE—Screen story by Fred Myton, directed by Lambert Hillyer, with a cast headed by Buck Jones. *Columbia*, 7 reels. The story of an Indian rider of the Pony Express in the early Western days. *Family audience.*

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

- Bill of Divorcement**—7 reels
(See page 12) *Mature audience*
I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang—8 reels
(See page 8) *Mature audience*
Payment Deferred—8 reels
(See page 10) *Mature audience*

SHORT SUBJECTS

SCENICS AND TRAVELOGUES

- DESERT TRIPOLI** (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
THE DEVIL'S ROPE (First ascent of the Matterhorn)—*Capital*, 3 reels. *Family audience.*
FANGS OF DEATH VALLEY—*Principal*, 2 reels. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
FROM BETHLEHEM TO JERUSALEM (World Traveltalks Series)—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. *Family audience.*
FROM KASHMIR TO KHYBER (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
GET THAT LION (Cougar hunt in Arizona)—*Principal*, 3 reels. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
HELLO CHICAGO (Views of city and World Fair buildings)—*Principal*, 1 reel. *Family audience.*
HOLLYWOOD THE CITY OF CELLULOID—*Principal*, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
THE ICELESS ARCTIC (Alaska)—*Educational*, 1 reel. *Family audience.*
IN THE GUIANAS (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
***THE INDIAN OF TODAY** (Navajo Indians)—*Principal*, 1 reel. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
KILLERS (Insects that prey upon one another)—*Educational*, 1 reel. *Family audience.*
LITTLE THRILLS (Hodge Podge Series)—*Educational*, 1 reel. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
MOSCOW (Fitzpatrick Traveltalks Series)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. *Family audience.*
OUR BIRD CITIZENS—*Educational*, 1 reel. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NOS. 4-5—*Paramount*, 1 reel each. *Family audience.*
PIGSKIN (Sport Champions Series)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 1 reel. *Family audience.*
PIRATE ISLES (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
SAN FRANCISCO—*Principal*, 1 reel. *Family audience.*
SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 4—*Columbia*, 1 reel. *Family audience.*
SCREEN SOUVENIRS NO. 5—*Paramount*, 1 reel. *Family audience.*
***SILVER SPRINGS** (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
SPORT THRILLS NO. 1—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 23—*Universal*, 1 reel. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
STUFF ON THE BALL (Sports-Eye-View Series)—*Paramount*, 1 reel. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
VENETIAN HOLIDAY (Magic Carpet Series)—*Fox*, 1 reel. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
***WALPI** (Hopi Indians)—*Principal*, 1 reel. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
A WHALE OF A YARN (William Finley's whaling trip to Alaska)—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
***WINGS OVER THE ANDES** (Shippee-Johnson Peruvian aerial expedition)—*Principal*, 3 reels. *Family audience. Suggested for schools and libraries.*

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, SKITS AND SERIALS

- ALWAYS KICKIN'**—Football comedy. *Educational*, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
THE BIG FLASH—Harry Langdon. *Educational*, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
BIRTHDAY BLUES—Our Gang. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 reels. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
COURTING TROUBLE—Charlie Murray. *Paramount*, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
HOCUS FOCUS—Clark and McCullough. *RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
HOLLYWOOD ON PARADE NOS. 4-5—*Paramount*, 1 reel each. *Family audience.*
HURRICANE EXPRESS (Serial) NOS. 9-12—*Mascot*, 2 reels each. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
THE LAST FRONTIER (Serial) NO. 8—*RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*
LEASE BREAKERS—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel. *Family audience.*
MA'S PRIDE AND JOY—Donald Novis. *Paramount*, 2 reels. *Family audience.*
MORTON DOWNEY - BROWN AND HENDERSON (America's Greatest Composers Series)—*Universal*, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

MORTON DOWNEY-VINCENT LOPEZ (America's Greatest Composers Series)—*Universal*, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

PARLOR BEDROOM AND WRATH—Edgar Kennedy. *RKO-Radio*, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

PASSING THE BUCK—Adventures of a ten dollar bill. *Vitaphone*, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

RAMBLING ROUND RADIO ROW NOS. 2-3—*Vitaphone*, 1 reel each. *Family audience.*

THE SOILERS—Zasu Pitts and Thelma Todd. *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

TIP TAP TOE—Hal Le Roy and Mitzi Mayfair. *Vitaphone*, 2 reels. *Family audience.*

TORCHY'S BUSY DAY—Ray Cooke. *Educational*, 2 reels. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE YACHT PARTY—Roger Wolfe Kahn and his orchestra. *Vitaphone*, 1 reel. *Family audience.*

YOUR HAT—Burns and Allen. *Paramount*, 1 reel. *Family audience.*

CARTOONS—1 reel each

BETTY BOOP'S MUSEUM (Talkartoon)—*Paramount*. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

FEATHERED FOLLIES (Aesop Fable)—*RKO-Radio*. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE FORTY THIEVES (Terrytoon)—*Educational*. *Family audience.*

THE GOAL RUSH (Flip the Frog Cartoon)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*. *Family audience.*

THE GREAT BIRD MYSTERY (Serappy Cartoon)—*Columbia*. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

HOOK AND LADDER NO. 1 (Terrytoon)—*Educational*. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE PHONEY EXPRESS (Flip the Frog Cartoon)—*Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer*. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

RIDE HIM BOSKO (Looney Tune)—*Vitaphone*. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SEEING STARS (Krazy Kat Cartoon)—*Columbia*. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

SING A SONG (Bouncing Ball Cartoon)—*Paramount*. *Family audience.*

SLEEPY TIME DOWN SOUTH (Bouncing Ball Cartoon)—*Paramount*. *Family audience.*

A SPANISH TWIST (Tom and Jerry Cartoon)—*RKO-Radio*. *Family audience.*

TOUCHDOWN MICKEY (Mickey Mouse Cartoon)—*United Artists*. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

THE UNDER DOG (Poeh the Pup Cartoon)—*Universal*. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

YOU'RE TOO CARELESS WITH YOUR KISSES (Merrie Melody)—*Vitaphone*. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

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Further information can be secured by writing to Ellsworth C. Dent, Secretary-Treasurer, Department of Visual Instruction, 1812 Illinois Street, Lawrence, Kansas.

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DEC 13 1932

NATIONAL BOARD of REVIEW MAGAZINE

Vol. VII, No. 9



December, 1932



The hosannas of international brotherhood at the end of "Kameradschaft" (see page 8)

*Published monthly, except July and August, by the
National Board of Review of Motion Pictures*

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NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW OF MOTION PICTURES

The National Board of Review of Motion Pictures was organized in 1909 by the People's Institute of New York City as a medium of reflecting intelligent public opinion regarding a growing art and entertainment. This is still the Board's function, together with that of disseminating information on the subject of motion pictures and carrying on a constructive program having to do with community co-operation in the advancement and uses of the art.

The National Board is a disinterested volunteer citizen body with community group affiliations in various parts of the country. It is opposed to legal censorship and in favor of the constructive better films method. It is at all times glad to co-operate with any outside agency to encourage and guide the motion picture in developing its possibilities as a great and useful medium of expression.

It carries on its work through various committees:

The General Committee—a body evolved out of the original group organized in 1909. It is the appeal and central advisory committee of the National Board to which policies are referred and to which decisions of the Review Committee regarding pictures may be carried either by the producers or by the Review Committee itself.

The Executive Committee—composed of members of the General Committee, is the directing body of the National Board, charged with the formulation of policies, the election of members, the expenditure of funds and the supervision of all administrative affairs.

The Review Committee—the large group of two hundred and fifty members carrying on the actual work of reviewing the films. It is divided into sub-groups which meet for review per schedule during each week in the projection rooms of the various motion picture companies.

The Membership Committee—which supervises the membership list of the Review Committee and recommends the names of proposed new members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The Exceptional Photoplays Committee—composed of critics and students of the motion picture. It reviews and publishes a critique of the finest films. Through this publication and by means of occasional showings of outstanding pictures to invited audiences, as well as through co-operation with community groups in sponsoring such showings, it seeks to encourage the artistic development of the motion picture. Its pioneer activity in this field which proved that the artistic picture will be supported by special audiences who believe in the aesthetic possibilities of the screen has done much to lay the foundations for the growing Little Photoplay Theatre movement of today.

All members of the committees of the National Board serve without pay. No member is connected with the motion picture industry. They are representative of varied interests and activities and many are connected with large public welfare organizations or educational institutions.

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The Essentials of a Good Picture:

Or What an Old Timer Hopes the Junior Reviewers Will Look for in the Movies

By LEROY E. BOWMAN

The story of the formation and functioning of the Junior Review Committee of the National Board has been given in previous issues of this Magazine so that our readers are generally familiar with it. It serves to bring the fresh, vital, youth viewpoint of the young people into the reviewing role and in turn to help the young people in forming their opinions and attitudes toward motion pictures by giving them the benefit of suggestion from the older members of the National Board Committees. At the first meeting of the junior group this year LeRoy E. Bowman of the Executive Committee, a director of the Child Study Association, presented to the members and guests gathered for a review in the Fox Film Corporation Little Theatre, ideas on picture criticism which will hold interest for all study groups and particularly those having Junior Committees. — EDITOR'S NOTE.



LeRoy E. Bowman

IT is a wholesome thing that the youth have joined the review groups and are going to help decide what is best, and therefore to be encouraged, in motion pictures. They have a point of view of their own and their critical capacities are probably as keenly

alert as those of more mature persons. It may be interesting to them however, and certainly is challenging to those who have reviewed films for years, for one of the latter groups to attempt to formulate a few of

the fundamentals that should determine the judgment of any motion picture.

First and foremost is the fact that the movies reach nearly all, or at least a very large proportion of the people. The entertainment film is not for the rich, the poor, the highbrow, the pure, the contaminated, nor for the youth or aged, but for all of us. Therefore it must be simple, and told in the language both of speech and action that is common to

all. It still can be meaningful and carefully produced. In fact almost all of the apparently learned, technical or abstruse subjects can be put in simple, everyday language if

the effort is made. It takes more brains and more social sympathy than the ordinary tabloid reporter or hack scenario writer commands but it can be done, and sometimes is done on the screen. Simplicity that is in accord with science and history is a vastly different thing from superficiality. Furthermore simple synthesis of the world's many specialties is what is needed more than any other one thing. The screen is the greatest medium for it.

Secondly, the movies should be informative one would think. More than the printed page they can give in brief time the happenings, the descriptions, the impressions of personalities that serve to keep ordinary people acquainted with a world bigger than that in which they live. We all move in restricted spheres, but the significant things of business, politics and large social matters take place on a vast scale. The eye of the camera sees far and can project us in thought beyond our petty environments. If the movies do perform this function, or rather to the extent they do, there will be less need for and less interest in the silly stories of impossible heroines and magnificent settings. These latter represent an "escape from the real" that is merely a pathological substitute for the opportunity to live in the big world that determines our social, political and economic welfare.

Let no misunderstanding arise as to the meaning of "informative" as used in the last paragraph. No one of sense wants didactic pictures, nor even pictures screened primarily to tell somebody something. Certainly we can do without any which might be produced to moralize to us. The best part of the movies is the stories they tell, and any information carried by the usual entertainment film should be a part of the circumstances attendant on the telling of the story. Nevertheless the story should be true in geography, history and science. Not all movie stories are that true, it might be added. A story to be enjoyed should carry conviction—that is the third consideration

for those who look at pictures with critical eyes.

A more subtle standard and one difficult to put in words, as it has been also difficult for producers to achieve, is to have the story placed in the world of things and people. It is easy to assume the logical and critical attitude toward an animal picture taken in Africa, or a story that obviously takes place in a foreign country. The same "locating" or placing of the story in its proper setting and the attendant limitations on its significance is more difficult if it is a story of beautiful creatures who marry wealthy Adonises. It is natural that we all want either to be or to marry the creatures, and the critical faculty finds no chance to operate against the natural wish unless the pictures carry some implications of the relative numbers and importance of Adonises and beautiful creatures ready to marry in actual life. A picture can exploit us unconsciously and by portraying what may occasionally be, or what might possibly be, the picture itself may become very misinformative, especially if it be one of a large number of the same kind. Reviewers need particularly to keep their balance when looking at pictures which do not maintain a balance with reality.

Balance in movies is virtue, as well as satisfaction. Sex for example occurs in manifold forms all over the cities and country and there is not the slightest reason why it should not occur in almost as many forms in the movies. As romance every one demands it. That the less poetic side of love life should also be presented no one can deny. Further, that the attraction of the female form should have its place on the screen seems also difficult to deny. But romance becomes silly sentiment and the female form becomes uninteresting when they are dished out as a daily diet without a fair admixture of the other ingredients of a normal active life. The reviewer will not fall into the deep dank hole of rank censorship if he constantly strives to hold up a

(Continued on page 13)

Making Them Move

"What makes the wheels go 'round?" in animated cartoons. The figures dart swiftly and rhythmically across the screen but, we ask, what makes them do it. The question was answered for us at a get-together of the National Board of Review when Mr. Harry Bailey of the Aesop Film Fables Studio demonstrated through drawings something of the process used. We found this very interesting and asked if we might not have the story in words if not in drawings to pass on to our readers. In response we received this detailed story from the Van Beuren Corporation, producers of Aesop Fables.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

ANIMATED movie cartoons are made not born. And the men who make them drink black coffee and chocolate ice cream sodas and sleep only between gags and comedy situations. It is common knowledge that if all the pencils which cartoon animators use to jot down ideas in the middle of the night were laid end to end they would make a double track from here to Zambesi and back again to the Aesop's Fables Studio in New York City.

That would be a good way to start an article on Aesop's Fables if it were the truth, but of course it isn't. And in the space allotted to me I'm going to give you a few succulent statistics served up on the platter . . . raw!

In the first place all cartoon characters of present-day cartoons stem from Aesop's Fables. The dog and the cat and the mouse and the rat . . . the cow and the horse and the fox and the grapes.

Approximately ninety-six and one-half people are concerned six days a week, fifty-two weeks in the year making Aesop's Fables and the Tom and Jerry cartoons at Van Beuren's Studio in New York. The half is the fellow who makes the sounds.

About eight thousand separate drawings make up the finished cartoon. Each drawing goes through five distinct operations—first the original pencil drawing is made by a master cartoonist . . . then it is traced on to celluloid by another . . . then the white parts are whited in with Chinese white paint. Follows the blacking-in of the solid black parts and then finally the photographing. Sometimes when the action makes it necessary a third color—gray—is also used.

Each drawing is photographed separately from overhead with a specially constructed motion picture camera which is operated by a foot treadle and makes a complete exposure as fast as you can say "Jack Robinson," although I never could see any reason why even a cartoonist should want to say "Jack Robinson." The exposures are made on the usual motion picture film, which comes in rolls.

It has been figured out that the Van Beuren Studio makes some 312,000 individual drawings with each year of production of Aesop's Fables and the Tom and Jerry cartoons. Each of these drawings is handled at least five times, making a minimum of 1,560,000 individual operations. The drawings make approximately 18,200 feet of finished film. All this film can be shown in the theatre in less than four hours.

But that isn't all. The cartoon motion pictures do not move of their own steam, so to speak, like the human actors. Each separate action means a separate drawing. The movement of a head, the stamping of a foot, the raising of an arm . . . about a dozen drawings for each of these completed actions. However, there is compensation in this fact. The cartoon characters are swell actors and they never disappoint their public. When they are not doing their stuff up to snuff . . . back into the paint pot and inkwell they go. In the old days of the silent cartoon that was all. But now with the necessity of sound the cartoon is a much more difficult proposition. The artist maps the story as of yore. They gather in conference and talk the thing into the camera, in a manner of speaking. There are artists at the meeting, of course, but in addition there is a musical director and what might be termed a "song-and-dance" man. Music to accompany the scenes is plotted in advance. Various steps or "gags" are demonstrated and the artists jot down their notes. The artists make rough sketches from their notes. They attempt to illustrate the action of the characters. Sometimes two or three



One of the cameras used in photographing Aesop's Fables. A pedal on the floor works the camera each pressure making an exposure, of which there are sixteen to a foot of film.

days elapse before an artist can get down to his drawing board after one of these conferences. The first sketches are made on translucent tissue paper. The average cartoon of seven hundred feet of film (about ten minutes running time) takes from 8,000 to 12,000 drawings and thirty backgrounds. This may sound impossible as a task, but sometimes the drawings are of only a hand or a foot.

The artist's board consists of a large drawing board with a glass inset in the middle about seven by ten inches in size. An ordinary 75 Watt electric bulb lights this up from underneath, thus enabling the artist to follow the action of his characters through several layers of paper. The paper has two holes at the top which fit over pegs in the drawing board. The system of holes and pegs is used throughout the entire process, including photographing, thus insuring proper registration of all drawings and actions. The first scene might be a cat walking. The first drawing would show the cat starting a step. The next would show the finish of the step. Placing these two, one over the other, the artist can see the start and finish of the action. Then he fills in the intermediate drawings to make the

action smooth. This is the actual "animating." Animating requires great skill and good animators can always find jobs even in bad times. The drawings are numbered according to scene and group. They must be made so the action will synchronize with the music. For this purpose the music is set up by the musical director in a system of "beats." Ofttimes the artist doesn't know the musical selection for a scene but if he knows the number of beats to the minute he will animate perfectly.

Next follows the tracing, the blacking, the graying or whiting. These last three operations are known as opaquing. Tracers copy the original drawings onto specially treated celluloid. As only objects which actually move must have separate drawings, backgrounds are usually made in continuous strips.

After the opaquing process is finished and the celluloid or "cells" as they are called, are dry we are ready for photographing.

After the background is put in place three layers of celluloid are placed on top of it, various characters appearing in the scene being on the separate layers of celluloid. For instance, three characters walk into the picture, one at a time, and then

stand alongside one another to sing a song. The cameraman would first place his background with three blank celluloids above it and snap several frames to give the final picture continuity and so that the characters do not appear to rush in. This action would be marked on the exposure sheet for the desired number of frames.

Then the first character appears. To complete one step requires from five to ten drawings, depending on the speed desired, the faster the action the fewer the drawings. However, if too few drawings are made the action becomes jumpy. While the first character is walking in to take his place the action is confined to one celluloid, the set-up on the camera being first the background, then two blank celluloids and on top the celluloid on which the character appears. When the first character takes his position in the scene, the second character starts to enter, the action being the same as the first.

The set-up would now be changed so that first there would be the background, then the first celluloid with the character who is already in his place, then a blank celluloid and on top the celluloid on which is traced the outline of the second character. When the second character is in his place the third character enters. Now all three layers of celluloid are in use until the third character is in place.

For the purpose of better illustrating the celluloid process, let us say that the three characters do not move their bodies while singing, merely opening their mouths in unison. The three figures would then be drawn on one celluloid and the three heads on another, so that separate drawings to animate the heads only would be needed, these being so set that when the celluloids are in place they would appear as one picture. There would then be an extra celluloid which might be used if the singers were to move their hands or feet for the purpose of adding gestures.

The cameraman in photographing would

follow his exposure sheet which would read "Background No. 1," "Celluloids 1, 2, 3" for the first frame or picture. The next exposure would read "Background No. 1," "Celluloids 1, 2, 4," on down through the scene, the celluloids being changed by the cameraman as indicated on his exposure sheet. But this is not the only thing the cameraman must keep in mind. Sound enters into the photography as well as every other operation in the making of a sound cartoon. The cameraman is instructed on the rhythm or number of beats of the music that is later to be added and by means of a secret process registers the beats on the negative film.

When the photographing is completed, the various scenes are arranged in order and a master print is made. All this while the musical director has been working out his music and rehearsing it, arranging original compositions whenever necessary, so that by the time the print is returned from the laboratory, he is ready for a final rehearsal. Minor cuts are sometimes necessary, but as a rule the work is so perfectly timed that the operations go through without a hitch.

The operations now shift before the microphone. The essential requisites are a sound proof room, the necessary recording apparatus, a projection booth and machine for the purpose of projecting the picture (silent) on the screen and last, but not least, the men to supply the music and sound effects. The film is started, the men get their cue and the score is rehearsed, music, foot-beats, thunder and lighting effects, all coming in at their proper places. The preparatory work has been so complete that one rehearsal is generally sufficient. The microphone is next put into action and the recording takes place.

It now merely remains for the picture negative and the sound track negative to be delivered to the laboratory, matched up properly, and hundreds of prints made so that another cartoon may be presented to audiences throughout the world.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS DEPARTMENT

This department seeks to include all photoplays of outstanding merit in the artistic development of the screen, with the object of bringing such pictures to the attention of discriminating readers, under the headings of *Exceptional* and *Honorable*

Mention. The opinions of a committee composed of trained students and critics of the screen are combined in an impartial review which aims to convey a comprehensive idea of the picture, covering both its excellencies and defects.

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Kameradschaft

Story by Karl Otten, scenario by Ernst Vajda, directed by G. W. Pabst, photographed by F. A. Wagner. A Nero Production, distributed in America by Associated Cinemas of America, Inc.

The cast

Wittkopp, a German miner.....Ernst Busch
His wife.....Elisabeth Wendt
Kasper (German miners).....Alexander Granach
Wilderer (of the).....Fritz Kampers
Kaplan (night shift).....Gustav Puettjer
Jean, a French miner.....Daniel Mendaille
Emile, his friend.....George Chalia
Francoise, Emile's sister.....Andree Ducret
An old French miner.....Alex Bernard
His grandson.....Pierre Louis

KAMERADSCHAFT, like *Potemkin*, is a newsreel film. In Europe they call them "documentaries." But *Kameradschaft* is not a prelude to revolution; revolution may be imminent and inferred, but this is a drama of an isolated event, a mine explosion that took place in Alsace, at Courrieres, in 1906, although it is set as of today. It was a disaster that for once dissolved all barriers, physical as well as the more insidious ones of urgent national hates, so that the German workers broke through to go down into the French end of the mine to save the men shut in below. That is record.

These are the facts of which Pabst made his film. As he has filmed it, they become a document of the terrific mass movement and courage which alone could open the high iron gates

that blocked the Germans out of the French mine. And over it all there is always that sense of barricade, of frontiers that recreate themselves, of men working in darkness that may suddenly stifle them with its escaping gases and a fire that never dies down. Pabst has filmed it ruthlessly, without soft focus, without sensuous textures or studio makeup. The light is always cold and hard, illumining meager bodies and worn faces and the fierceness of thin women and aged men impaled on the iron gates of the mine yard. Everything is obliterated in that strong, high light but the horror of the mines and the fear of death that hangs limply over the little town. Even the young know no youth. Everything goes down into the mines.

Pabst has not tried to individualize, although to concentrate his drama he has picked several protagonists: the tall German who leads the rescue party; the bearded old man—suggesting Anatole France with his long, gaunt face—who cannot wait for gates or elevators to take him into the mine to find his grandson but slips past them into the darkness, falling down the interminable steel ladders into an abyss of tumbling logs and rivers loosed by the fires; the French girl who tries to escape the colorlessness and obsession of the mines but is drawn back into it; the Dreigroschenoper three musketeers who flounder at the sight

BULLETIN

1932

Exceptional

The Battle of Gallipoli
I Am a Fugitive from
a Chain Gang
Kameradschaft
Mädchen in Uniform
A Nous la Liberté
Payment Deferred
Road to Life

Honorable Mention

Der Andere
Arrowsmith
As You Desire Me
A Bill of Divorcement
Bring 'Em Back Alive
Broken Lullaby
Elisabeth von
Oesterreich
Golden Mountains
Grand Hotel
Der Raub der
Mona Lisa
Zwei Menschen

of a French woman but bend steel frontiers as if they were papier maché: Pabst has picked these out. And, somehow, in capitalizing these few, he has lost the sense of the thousands who never came up again. The close is too triumphant.

One must inevitably compare this film with *Potemkin*. They are of a class and a kind. *Potemkin* was the more concise, the more lyrical and ecstatic. There is no physical beauty in *Kameradschaft*. It is closer to the newsreel, impersonal, loosely constructed, and as social satire incomplete. Pabst has taken no attitude toward the mine owners, the executives, so that the drama is the event itself rather than the causes that made it possible. It is an isolated happening, without cause and without end.

But, as drama, *Kameradschaft* is terrific. One never loses the sense of oppression that sets it; the dullness, the lack of warmth, the coldness of everything but the feeling that one worker has for another. The executives stand like automata, the frontier guards snap on one cog, the wives and families of the workers mass against the gates that are shut to them. In the mines, the illusion is amazing. One feels unable to breathe, the walls bear down, the pressure and smell of the gases become physical realities to the spectator. Nothing could so give one the sense of depth and the futility

of these lives as the shots down the elevator well, and of the elevator itself disappearing. Long after it is out of sight, the spectator sees only moving ropes that seem to pull eternally.

Pabst has been sparing of his sound and dialogue, but the sounds underground, the slithering of the elevator ropes, the beating of men's bodies against the water, the tap of metal on metal as the men send word above, the sense of fear and horror in individual cries, intensify his drama.

The test of a film is a second seeing. With *Kameradschaft* the excitement does not pale. But one demands even more causes and a solution more succinct than the hosannas with which it closes. The three musketeers do not belong in a film so ruthless in tone; they remind one that this is a film, not an event, and it is only in their episodes and in the interpolated war scenes when the French miner imagines the masked German approaching him is an enemy and that this is the war again, that the illusion of an event directly experienced is broken. Yet, when one thinks back over the earlier silent films of Pabst's, when character was dissipated in soft focus and each illusion reeked of the studio, *Kameradschaft* is a vigorous and amazing document. It is of life and present living. Few films, except the Russians, are that.—E. G.

Critical Comment

Under this heading pictures will be discussed that in the judgment of the Exceptional Photoplays Committee do not gain the rating of Exceptional yet possess qualities that we have found our readers are interested in having talked about.

Generosity on a Grand Scale

IF I HAD A MILLION breaks all the rules. It throws the dramatic unities to the winds, laughs in the face of the usual feature formula, discards the theory of the one-man show by having flocks of authors to write it, flocks of directors to produce it, and flocks of stars to act in it, and succeeds in being, in spite, or because, of all this, a

very creditable and diverting piece of entertainment.

There has always been in the moving picture, extending, perhaps, the prejudice of the stage to the one act play, a frank avoidance of the short dramatic subject. If a thing is to be short on the screen, it must, it seems, be funny. Or else it must be entirely without plot, a travelogue or a scenic. There has been nothing in the moving picture to

correspond with the short story in fiction. You may be funny in two reels, but you may not be interesting in less than five. The feature picture must be a single story, full length entertainment, all of a piece. Naturally, such a story policy eliminates a great deal of fascinating material which cannot be stretched to feature length, but which, because of its very shortness, is stimulating to the imagination. The advantages of the short dramatic episode every now and then tempt directors and writers to amalgamate separate short stories into a satisfying dramatic whole. Thornton Wilder did it successfully in "The Bridge of San Luis Rey"; Tiffany Thayer less successfully in "Thirteen Men." On the screen there were *Roads of Destiny*, Griffith's *Intolerance*, Maurice Tourneur's *Woman* and Marshall Neilan's *Bits of Life*. But in spite of the fact that an attempt at continuity was made in these by having the same director direct all the episodes and having the same actors play the parts in all of them, the amalgam was invariably not strong enough to carry the production through as a unit. Whereas in *If I Had a Million*, even with different directors and with different players for each episode, with the exception of Richard Bennett, the structure holds. Perhaps the integrity of Mr. Bennett's performance is one of the reasons. At any rate there is cohesion rather than chaos and the various situations manage to propel the point of the play through to the climax.

It is rather to be regretted, however, that the climax has to go the obvious road "over the hill to the poor house." A million dollars may show off to its best advantage among the indigent and the homeless; heavens knows it has had plenty of practice on the screen. But after the freshness of the Lubitsch episode and the subtlety of that played by Wynne Gibson, the sentimentality of the old ladies is somewhat irritating, a shameless bid to the box office. Fortunately it is redeemed by the competent performance of May Robson who keeps always on the right side of the sob line.

Perhaps it was inevitable in such a picture that there should be a poor house sequence just as it was inevitable that there should be a Death House sequence. The long arm of coincidence which brings one million to a boy who is about to pay the life penalty is stretched rather beyond the point of convincingness. Gene Raymond, who seems always to be a blond youth in a black shirt about to be hanged, goes melodramatically to the chair with his check in his pocket. Curiously enough, out of the eight who receive the millions, two turn out to be desperate criminals who receive the money at the most critical moment in their careers of crime. Besides the murderer, there is a fourth offense forger. His episode, however, has less melodrama and more irony and is by that much the better. Having fraudulently signed other people's names to checks, he can't sign his own to his honest million without being caught and held for a prison sentence, probably life. Nor, having turned so many crooked deals among his friends, can he get them to advance him money on the check, buy it for a thousand cash, in order that he may get out of town and away from the police. They believe the check is just another of his forgeries. In the end his million doesn't even buy him a peaceful bed in a "flop house." The proprietor, paid a million dollars for a ten cent bunk, quietly telephones for "the wagon."

But among all the episodes it is the Lubitsch sequence perhaps, the briefest of them all, that is the most outstanding. It is an excellent piece of cinematic presentation. It uses setting to "place" the submerged clerk as King Vidor used it in *The Crowd*. It subordinates sound to pantomime as Chaplin did in *City Lights*. It uses wit as René Clair used it in *Le Million*. And in bringing the clerk from the anonymity of a hundred desks through the offices which establish the character of the firm to the inner sanctum of the President, called by fine irony "Mr. Brown," it used the camera as only Lubitsch can use it. Of course he had the luck to draw—or the astuteness to

choose—for his chief character Charles Laughton whose pantomime is in the proper moving picture tradition. The piece is beautifully complete.

Its polished wit makes the W. C. Fields-Alison Skipworth episode seem by comparison pure farce. Yet in this and in the Charles Ruggles sequence underneath the slapstick, under the débris of falling timber and broken china, there is a certain sly comment on the limitations of human nature, on our lack of imagination in living—or in spending a million dollars. Probably most of us if we got our million would spend it pursuing road-hogs or wrecking objects of art or whatever equivalent happened to be obsessing our minds at the moment. We grasp at the smaller satisfaction and let the larger thing escape us. However, for all the human touches, one rather regrets that there is not one ordinary everyday person in the lot. Henry Peabody starts promisingly but he turns out to be slightly pathological with a more than slightly pathological scold for a wife. It might have been refreshing if there had been a John Doe who sensibly proceeded to pay the mortgage off the house or put John, Junior, through college. Incidentally, the title, though good box office in hitting the individual, is not particularly accurate. It really is "If He, She, or They Had a Million."

It is to be hoped that the film will entice producers away from the proved formula and into the experimental field. Its pattern, although not entirely new, is new enough and has freshness of treatment. For one thing, it speaks well for the mosaic method of producing a feature. The results are somewhat along the lines of a Moscow Art Theatre production in which the ideal was to perform superbly even the smallest "bit." Whether this is due to what might be called an "all star" cast, or whether the same effect might have been got with a well-directed stock company is problematical. Certainly the assemblage of talent is far greater than that usually gathered together for a feature picture. Perhaps there is here a

lesson for the producer who has been too much inclined to let a single star with his or her "support" carry the whole burden of the performance. What is the use of authors carefully creating characters if only one or two of them is to be interpreted with any degree of talent? It may be that greater acting ability per production is one of the answers to the cry for better pictures.

—F. T. P.

Know Your Movies

By WELFORD BEATON

Reviewed by James Shelley Hamilton

MR. Welford Beaton has been a friend and critic of the motion picture this many a year. Living in Hollywood, in close contact with producers and actors, he has said his say over and over again with remarkable sturdiness and honesty, fighting vigorously for his ideas and ideals and managing, through some rare personal quality, to keep both his independence and the respect and friendship of the people with whom he has so often had to disagree.

He is one of the few men left who still battle for the silent film. To him the talkies have been the ruination of the motion picture art and the motion picture business. This new book of his, *Know Your Movies*, is an impassioned summation of his pleas to go back to speechless movies, on the ground that only so can the golden stream of former years be diverted back to the box-office.

It is the kind of book that continually tempts one to argument: one would like to sit down with its author, in a friendly and perhaps convivial way, and thrash out point after point of personal opinion—on which so many of its pronouncements lean—sure that whatever the outcome might be, one would at least have had a stimulating give and take with a man who is enthusiastic and sincere.

This present arguer, for instance, would suggest first that ideally speaking, and leaving out some highly practical considerations,

it is no help at all to the cinema art for the motion picture industry to make money. On the contrary, the new-born art was inescapably doomed to be the victim of constant and incessant attempts at infanticide from the moment it began to be treated industrially and looked upon as a goose to lay golden eggs. No art, as art, has ever had contemporary financial prosperity through mass appreciation. Of course Mr. Beaton knows this, but he is too astute to mention it in arguing to business men in behalf of the art of the silent film.

However, even from the box-office standpoint there is plenty of reason to doubt that the finish of the great era of movie prosperity was caused by the shift to talkies. That was an abnormal prosperity, anyway, a wild gold rush that inevitably had to come to the end of its pioneering phase and settle down to a saner relation to what the public normally wanted. The boom had already ended and the audiences were falling away even in the days of the silent film, and it was the novelty of pictures that talked which lured them back for a little while longer till the novelty wore off and the fundamental dissatisfaction became manifest again.

As for the cinematic art, the gloomy prophets who foretold its death when talkies came have pretty generally changed their minds and come to agree that sound and speech, rightly used, enhance the power of motion pictures, without hurting in any essential way their peculiar individual quality. The dissatisfaction that Mr. Beaton blames for the decrease in attendance—and profits—is a question many people disagree about: Mr. Beaton is sure he knows the answer, and his answer is: "talkies." His loyalty to the silent film seems to be an emotional matter—he can find plenty of reasons for it, but he often forgets some of the reasons and contradicts himself with others. He says in one place "silent pictures gave most and asked nothing," and not so many pages later he says "what we saw on the screen did not entertain us. We got from it only what our imaginations put into it." Before

his book is finished he has accepted all the elements that have up to now entered into the excellence of the best talkies—the appropriate use of music, of sound other than speech, and of speech itself (but he would have speech limited to the extent to which spoken titles were formerly used).

It would seem, then, that Mr. Beaton is objecting to poor talkies rather than to talkies in themselves: poor silent pictures annoyed him much less because there was only one sense organ through which to be annoyed. No one could be more appreciative of *A Nous la Liberté* or *Road to Life* than he. But such pictures are not the wows of the movie industry and never will be, just as *Seventh Heaven*, which he acclaims so highly, would never be crowned by anything but a huge mass vote. To come down to the whole gist of it, Mr. Beaton, with all his appreciation of the artistic elements in the cinema, cares more about the great public getting the sort of entertainment they like best. In times like these it is a bit reckless to point to box-office receipts as proof that the final public repudiation of talkies has been pronounced.

Published by Howard Hill, Hollywood, California. Price, \$2.00.

Visual Instruction—Its Value

WHAT use has the motion picture in school work is asked by parents, by teachers, by Motion Picture Study Club groups and film producers. The question has a double import for it means what proven use has been demonstrated, and what potential use can be counted upon.

This question is considered in a report, recently from the press, entitled "Visual Instruction—Its Value and Its Needs." The report was prepared by Dr. F. Dean McClusky, as president of the National Academy of Visual Instruction. It includes material gathered from an earlier report made by Dr. McClusky in 1923 and is brought up-to-date with recent material.

The purpose of the report is to make an analysis of the present status of Visual Education. It is divided into nine divisions, each a reply to one of the following questions:

- I. What is Visual Instruction?
- II. Has educational research demonstrated the value of Visual Instruction?
- III. Has the acid test of the classroom experience shown that visual methods are valuable as aids in instruction?
- IV. Has the experience of museums, libraries, newspapers, publishers, advertisers, et cetera, shown that visual presentation makes a valuable contribution to a more complete understanding and appreciation of the world in which we live?
- V. What has the experience of commercial enterprise shown us about the development and manufacture of visual materials?
- VI. What is the actual and potential market for the major types of materials used in Visual Instruction?
- VII. Is the market for these materials being adequately supplied?
- VIII. What appraisal is possible of the methods and product of the several major sources of pedagogical motion pictures?
- IX. What are the fundamental principles upon which must be based the future development of Visual Education if effective results are to be obtained?

The report runs 125 pages and is available at \$1.00 from the Mancall Publishing Corporation, 7 W. 44th St., N. Y. C.

(Continued from page 4)

standard first of the presentation of all life's many phases and secondly of sympathy with expressions of love and hate not only as they are practiced in his caste but in all others.

All of which leads to the most important consideration for old timers and juniors who try to judge pictures, and that is not to take oneself too seriously. It is a great

temptation to think that a world is going to be besmirched if the reviewers let something unwholesome slip by. As a matter of fact it is a good thing to let the world sharpen its critical teeth on something not too wholesome sometimes and learn to reject as well as to swallow. As our job is to see life and see it whole and compare the movies to it, so the ordinary theatre goer should do likewise. It is much more important that different phases of life, and different kinds of lives be presented to him than that he should be fed "pure" stuff. It is in the matters where his judgment cannot operate and where his information does not carry that the movies should give the right impression.

The foregoing is not to detract from the importance of the reviewer's job. He is in a real sense the most important factor of social control in the production of motion pictures a control fully justified since they are so universal in their appeal. We cannot allow purely commercial control and its attendant exploitation of the less admirable qualities of human nature to have complete sway. The injection of the maximum influence of the community through such efforts as the review groups is the most effective present solution.

One last fundamental is apt to occur to those who have heard review group discussions. It is the wisdom of talking in common English and not in the jargon of the motion picture studio. The value of the critic resides in his ability to judge what he sees from the standpoint of others who will witness it rather than from the narrow technical standpoint of him who produced it. One cannot blame the habitué of the studio for shop talk, but it seems affected and ineffective on the lips of any others. In this connection the thesis of this short message might be restated: the best judgment of the movies is to be formed not by comparing them with themselves, nor with what might be, but with life as it happens to all of us every day.

BETTER FILMS FORUM

EDITOR: BETTINA GUNCZY

Department of the Better Films National Council

School Children and the Cinema

LESS and less does it become necessary to depend upon blind guessing in the matter of information regarding children and the motion picture—either in the question of the effect of motion pictures on children or that of the picture preferences of children. Studies have been conducted in the past, many since the early 1919 one of the National Board of Review, the results of which were published in the pamphlet, "The Motion Pictures Not Guilty," and with the present time the number is increasing. The subject is one that is engaging the attention of educators and welfare workers not alone in America, but all over the world.

One of the latest studies has come out of England. It is compiled from material gathered by the Education Committee of the London County Council. The questioning was conducted by leaders and inspectors from the Council and covered over 21,000 children, including many different kinds of schools.

The results as to attendance showed that:

Age	Percentage attending once or twice a week	Attending irregularly	Never attending
11-14	40.9	53.4	5.7
8-10	41.1	50.9	8.0
5-7	36.5	41.2	22.3
Under 5	30.0	33.0	37.0

The "film fan" starts early. The "twicers" are nearly 11% of the group of the age 11-14, nearly 9% at 8-10 years of age, and remain as high as 7% down to the age of 3. Below the age of 8, however, the proportion of irregular attendance falls with the age in a marked degree.

It was seen that, as a whole, boys tend to go to the cinema rather more frequently than girls, except that at the age of 11-14 a higher percentage of girls than boys confess

to visiting the cinema twice a week. The girls who go regularly once a week, however, are a considerably lower percentage (6 to 8%) than the boys. By far the commonest time for visiting the cinema is Saturday afternoon. Children's performances at lower prices, take place then. This is the principal reason for Saturday afternoon attendance, but it is strongly fortified in the case of the younger children at least, by the fact that it helps to give the mothers a little free time, and secures a reasonable hour for return home. A great many children attend evening performances also—sometimes with but frequently without, their parents. The films shown at the Saturday afternoon performances are, in general, at least free from what most people would regard as plainly unsuitable matter. The volume of attendance is affected by the cinema facilities of the neighborhood. Usually these are ample. But in the case of one or two schools in very poor neighborhoods, the attendance is much below the average because of the lack of easily accessible picture houses. Where facilities are normal it appears to be the case that at the lower ages the better off children (in a socially "good" school) go less frequently, and at the higher ages no more frequently than the worse off children. Taken all around the income level of the parents (within the ordinary elementary school limits) does not seem greatly to affect the percentage of attendance. In some schools the poorer children go more frequently to cinemas than do the better off children.

Great care was taken in this study in getting from the children truthful reports on the kinds of films seen, their preferences and the intellectual and moral effects of the films. As oral answers were likely to be misleading it was arranged that a good many answers should be given in writing

and much of the information is based also on "compositions" written in the ordinary way by the children for their teachers. The films seen by the children, broadly speaking, extend over the whole range of film material. Infants and young children prefer comic films of the "cartoon" order, of which *Mickey Mouse* is the most typical and the most popular. The comic film remains fairly popular at all age ranges; and even where it is not the first preference it is the comic element (or what is nearly the same thing, the unexpected or incongruous) which interests the children.

Of the effects of the films the following points were established: all the inspectors who mentioned it, and in this they are supported by most of the evidence of teachers, are convinced that the morally questionable element in films (i.e., that reserved for adults) is ignored by children of school age. The element which the adult would most deprecate to be put before children does in fact, bore them. That it may do harm in particular cases is not denied, but there appears to be no widespread mischief. It does not follow that this would be equally true had the inquiry included young people, say, of 15 to 18 years of age. The younger children for a time imitate in their play what they have seen on the films. For example, children under 7 who have seen a fighting adventure film come to school with rulers or pencils stuck in their belts, after the manner of weapons. But these external evidences of film influence are usually fugitive, and at least are confined to play. Though film influence seems not to affect conduct outside play, and the worst delinquent in a school is sometimes a child who never goes to the pictures, nevertheless some children absorb film knowledge which seems to be kept in a mental department used in school only when an appropriate stimulus is applied. Children who seem dull, and are in fact silent when ordinary school work is the subject of conversation, wake up, take eager part in the discussion of films, and display rather surprising knowledge. It is stated

over and over again that the teachers themselves were astonished, when they explored it, at the store of film information possessed by their pupils. These children know the stars, their lines of business, the films which brought them fame, where they make their homes, and personal details of their histories gathered from the film periodicals which the children evidently read.

The one distinct evil that is mentioned with such frequency by inspectors and teachers, and with such specific examples as leave little doubt of its existence, is that children are often frightened at the films, and that the fear remains with them and causes dreams. Three examples quoted are: (a) "Over 10% of the children I questioned admit having frights caused by incidents on the screen and having frightening dreams afterwards. Pictures of ghosts were the chief cause, but other causes were mentioned, e.g., a face moving without a body, a long knife moving slowly to kill someone." (b) "There is no doubt that some pictures cause great fear and produce disagreeable dreams. In one school 117 out of 213 children confess to being frightened and 178 out of 213 admitted unpleasant dreams as a result. The younger children are frightened chiefly by ghosts, the older by mystery." (c) "A fairly large proportion of children admit that some of the pictures they see frighten them and cause them to dream. Apart from this it is true to say that they themselves dislike the kind of picture which we should prefer them not to see." There can be little question, the report states, therefore that war pictures, gruesome and terrible details from which are undoubtedly remembered, often no doubt subconsciously, by the children, and "mystery" plays with terrifying incidents have undesirable, and possibly permanent, effects upon children.

Apart from this single point, the inquiry brought out no other point upon which there was definite evidence of harm. In spite of the strong opinions of some able and devoted head teachers to the contrary, the preponderance of evidence is that the actual ef-

fect of the pictures on the children is not substantially harmful. For instance, though specific inquiry was made, instances of children having stolen in order to get money to go to the films are negligible in number. Nor is there any evidence of imitative misconduct on the part of these school children. On the other hand, there is considerable evidence of boys, and less frequently, girls, running errands and doing odd jobs for parents and for others in order to get money to go to the films. Sometimes paid work at home is said to be a mild form of blackmail on parents, sometimes a mild type of bribery by parents. There is little doubt that, as a means of enlarging the children's experience (not by any means always in an undesirable way) and of giving clear cut knowledge of certain kinds, the cinema is an effective instrument.

It is gratifying that the results vindicate the films for if they had not it would have been difficult to have done anything about it for as the Education officer who sums up the conclusions says, "Fortunately or unfortunately, nothing short of the universal and summary execution of inventors can prevent the application of science to easy amusement, and to its commercial supply." For those wishing to add this pamphlet to their reference file of material on this subject we give the information that it can be secured from the London County Council, The County Hall, Westminster Bridge, S. E. 1, London, England, for 6d.

A year ago, in November, 1931, the Nineteenth Century Club of Memphis, Tenn., became interested in a plan for the formation of a women's council to select children's pictures to be shown at the theatres on a "Family Night," to be held in the theatres each week. From this beginning has grown the present Better Films Council of Memphis composed of a board of ten directors and a large membership representing many organizations of the city.

The two leaders in the local movement responsible for its development are Mrs.

Lawrence S. Akers, who is chairman of the child psychology department of the Nineteenth Century Club where the matter was first discussed, and Mr. L. A. Lightman who is president of the Motion Picture Theatre Owners of America and the owner of many theatres in Memphis, and who in his theatres practices what he preaches as president of the MPTO—community cooperation and service.

After this initial interest in November no time was wasted and Mrs. Akers wrote, "We began our programs on January first and had splendid results, both from the standpoint of selected films and the response of the public in the way of patronage. The managers of our suburban theatres have shown a wonderful spirit of cooperation and with their assistance and the backing of various organizations of the city, we shall surely accomplish great good." From that time forward family nights have been conducted in the suburban or neighborhood theatres.

This Council believes in working in a positive and not a negative way. They urge the theatres to show the family pictures and assist them in their selection of such pictures and they go further by displaying, at the theatres exhibiting such pictures a special shield of approval, so that there can be no doubt on the part of the public as to a theatre's cooperation. This shield appears also with the advertising of the approved pictures in the newspapers, providing thus a unique idea in Photoplay Guides.

The family nights were well established by February and by March, the Better Films Committee of the Nineteenth Century Club which had been conducting this work felt that it had made sufficient progress to enlarge its scope by organizing a city-wide Better Films Council. In writing of their organization plans Mrs. Akers said, "By taking in numerous civic, patriotic, and religious organizations and Parent-Teacher Associations, we feel sure that we shall become a greater power for good in the community. We have, therefore, called a meet-

ing of those interested in the Better Films Movement for March 31st. Each organization joining us will have one official representative on our Board. The idea is not to allow the Council to become too big right now but rather to have it continue small for the present and add to it as the occasion demands. Of course, we shall include representatives of the exhibitors and film exchange managers in the Council, too."

It was a distinct pleasure on the part of the Better Films Secretary of the National Board to visit this group in May and learn at first hand of the intelligent and enthusiastic interest and fine personnel backing the movement. There was the enthusiasm to carry forward the plans and policies which had been carefully studied. The organization which was formed at that time has been functioning with highly favorable results and this fall Mrs. Akers writes, "We have had a very successful year and have accomplished more than we thought possible in so short a time."

This city may be especially fortunate in having unusually managed theatres to work with but the tendency now among theatre chains and independent theatre owners generally in the neighborhood houses is to listen to and answer as far as they can the desires of the interested, organized public in picture presentations and specialized programs. So that it can be in a community not simply a matter of wishing but a matter of getting as they have in Memphis, good family programs.

THE Rutherford (N. J.) Better Films Committee officially opened its ninth year with an Executive Board meeting, September 22nd. Mrs. E. F. Miner, the new president, presided. Before announcing the committee chairmen and the program plans for the year she asked for even greater cooperation and harder work on the part of the represented organizations, and their personnel. Following this a motion was made to send a circular letter to all organizations, explaining the purpose of the

committee and containing a request that someone represent them at each Better Films meeting and take back to their group such information as would be useful. Mrs. Miner also expressed the wish that there would be greater cooperation with the local theatre and that every effort be made to interest and increase the audience for the better pictures shown. The program committee announced that the programs of the first three meetings of the season would be: in October, a speaker from the RKO-Radio Pictures Corp.; in November, an informal dinner; and in December, the Junior Review Committee program.

So many Council and Committee groups are asking what shall we plan for our monthly programs that we offer here as helpful suggestion the entire past year's program of the Rutherford Committee as given by Miss Martha P. Clark, the Program Committee Chairman at the final 1931-32 season meeting:

"At our open meeting in October, we were privileged in having as a speaker, John A. Thomas of the Exceptional Photoplays Committee of the National Board of Review, who gave us a most interesting talk on the 'Effect of Sound on the Motion Picture.' (The motion picture or dramatic critic of one of the local papers in a community could well be invited for such a subject).

"The 'Relationship of the Motion Picture to the Drama' was the topic most ably presented by our townsman, Mr. Harry G. Grover, Director of the Rutherford Little Theatre Guild, at the November meeting.

"The Junior Better Films group contributed in a delightfully entertaining way to our year's program by staging a puppet show at the December meeting.

"The mid-season meeting combined sociability and business in the form of a dinner at the Baptist Church for the Committee with guests and friends. Three phases of Better Films work were considered; the previewing of pictures; the reviewing of pictures, and the family-week-end program—

a lively discussion in which all took a marked interest and many an active part.

"Mr. Harry Alan Potamkin, a motion picture critic of international reputation, and Miss Winifred Crawford, Instructor in Visual Education at Teachers' College in Montclair (N. J.), were the respective speakers at the February and March meetings. The latter program being in charge of the Visual Education Committee.

"A discussion of current pictures, led by Mrs. Wilmot Moore, chairman of the Reviewing Committee, proved a popular method of procedure at the April meeting.

"At the May meeting Mr. Arthur De Bra of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors, talked on 'What Is Happening in the Motion Picture Industry.'"

This meeting brought to a close the eighth year of outstanding activity of this Committee. And now the new season's work is being enthusiastically undertaken.

CITIES in the South have always been well to the forefront in better films activity and so as new groups are formed there we expect much from them and are not often disappointed.

New Orleans, known is it not as "America's most unique city," has in addition to quaint houses with old metal balconies, delectable foods, gorgeous foliage, and many other things to delight the tourist and visitor, families like any other city and movie houses to furnish entertainment for these families and their children. And so like any other citizens of any other city they are interested too in planning that they see the best motion pictures and that their children see the motion pictures best suited for them. This interest is made active through the Better Films Committee in New Orleans of the Louisiana Cooperative Educational Association.

This Committee began the sponsoring of junior matinees on Saturday early in 1932, showing newer pictures and revivals of some old favorites. Mrs. J. M. White, chairman of the Better Films Committee and one of

the leaders in the work of the entire Educational Association, wrote a few months after this that they had made a good impression on the public with their matinees and hoped to get the theatre to cooperate on family nights.

It was our pleasure to meet Mrs. White and Mrs. A. S. Tucker, working with her in the Better Films Committee, and their associates this spring and to learn how they plan to gradually extend their work. This Committee is unique in that it is a standing committee of a state organization. In its aims however it is like unto other such Committees having as its stated objectives the study of the motion picture, the support of the better motion pictures, the encouragement of family audience pictures and children's programs, and the endorsement of visual education. Organizations and interested individuals are invited to join the Committee.

The matinees started again this fall with renewed interest. Mrs. Tucker writes that the RKO Orpheum Theatre has offered its full cooperation in giving the theatre and a supervised program for a junior matinee to be put on every Saturday morning. She has promised us a story telling how the new season's program is working out and we hope later to pass that and its suggestions on to our readers.

THE Motion Picture Chairman of the Wisconsin Federation of Women's Clubs, Mrs. J. C. Buckland, in writing to us in regard to literature of the National Board which had been sent to her for her fall state meeting, gave us the following brief but interesting word of her activities:

"The motion picture workers seemed very appreciative of your literature and I trust more of it will be used in Wisconsin. Our Motion Picture Conference was held in the same room as the exhibit. Mr. Fred S. Meyer, president of the Motion Picture Theatre Owners of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, addressed the conference using the resolutions passed at the Seattle con-

vention as the outline of his talk which was very interesting.

"From the District Chairmen reports we learn that Wisconsin is not failing to do her part in helping the average movie-goers to discriminate between good and bad movies and also in helping to improve 'the grist that is ground from the Hollywood mills.' Much attention is given to establishing 'Family Nights' in the neighborhood theatres. The cinema must please the masses to live. Does not the movie problem involve the necessity of improving public taste? Teachers of English in our State have felt this responsibility and in some of our High Schools very good work has been done with some of the excellent films. The English teachers being assisted by our clubwomen. We have organized more Motion Picture Councils this year. We know the combined efforts of many groups bring success."

Mrs. Buckland has struck an important note in stressing the work to improve public taste. That goes hand in hand with any work for the improvement of pictures. For pictures must necessarily be made, as she says, to appeal to the greatest number, so efforts can be well expended on building larger discriminating audiences. And this is being done through the growing interest in photoplay appreciation work among young people in junior review committees and school classes.

On several different years Mrs. Buckland has been one of the delegates to come from a long way to our National Board of Review conferences and we hope to be able to greet her again this year.

SO much is being said, written and talked about "family nights" lately that we almost overlook the junior programs prepared especially for the little children. But this is Christmas time when thought is particularly of children's pleasures so we will quote from the annual report of Mrs. J. A. McRae, chairman of the Department of Junior Matinees of the Charlotte (N. C.)

Better Films Committee, which is so filled with the spirit of friendly and loving service for the youngsters.

"Our Junior Matinee—sponsored by the Carolina Theatre and The Charlotte Better Films Committee with the hearty endorsement and cooperation of the Parent-Teacher Council—is finishing up another successful year of service, and truly service to the children has been the one objective. Children should not be denied the movies, but should be guided and directed. There are many fine pictures suitable for children, the educational or entertainment value of which cannot be questioned. Programs have been planned with this in mind—balanced programs of a 'funny,' a travel talk or newsreel, and a feature picture. From time to time a prologue or perhaps, community singing has been added. Some of the outstanding pictures shown this year were *Skippy*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Big Trail*, *Touchdown*, *Cimarron*, *A Connecticut Yankee*, *Spirit of Notre Dame*, *Father's Son*, *Seas Beneath*, *Trader Horn* and *Sookey*.

"Our Christmas Party was the best we have ever had. It was sponsored by the Carolina Theatre, The Charlotte News and the Better Films Committee. The representative of the News deserves special commendation for the work he did in putting over this party. Tickets of admission were distributed through school nurses and the Family Relief Association. Candy, fruit and 'Yo Yo's' were donated by some of the merchants. A capacity house of the city's less fortunate children was given a real treat. Those of us who were present upon this occasion came away sadder, perhaps, but uplifted over the manifestation of childhood appreciation.

"An unusually large number of parties have been given at the matinees this year. Teachers have entertained their grades at a Junior Matinee Party as a reward for excellence or for perfect attendance. For the same reason Room Mothers and P.-T. A.s have entertained groups. Birthday parties have been frequent.

"'School News,' a Sunday Feature Section of the Charlotte News, carries a write-up each week of coming attractions at the matinee, affording particularly fine publicity. Another way of advertising is by catchy posters. Parent-Teacher chaperones place these posters on the bulletin boards of all schools.

"The Junior Matinee has the good will of the community and each year grows in favor. Through it an interest in the kind of pictures shown children is being developed—slowly—it is true, but 'A little leaven will leaven the whole.'"

The Charlotte Committee, which has a very active corps of officers and chairmen, is again to be under the capable presidency of Mrs. T. S. Franklin who has given so much interest to the work in the past. Another able officer continued is Mrs. W. L. Butt, showing appreciation of her faithful and enthusiastic service as Review Committee Chairman.

IN September word was received of the appointment of the new Motion Picture Chairman of the Rhode Island Federation of Women's Clubs and soon thereafter we were favored with a visit from this new chairman, Mrs. Clifton Thornley of Pawtucket. She was interested in publications and suggestions for her work and later she writes, "I have spent nearly this whole week reading material on motion pictures and have almost come to the conclusion that I know less than I did at the beginning. However, I suppose I will fall into the stride in time and only hope that I shall be able to carry on as ably and efficiently as Mrs. Harrison" (her predecessor from whom we have published reports in this department in the past). This sincere statement means that Mrs. Thornley will make a valuable chairman, one who is studying and familiarizing herself fully with her subject and one who realizes there is much to learn. The Motion Picture Bulletin which has been prepared by the past chairman is being continued with many copies being mailed and

posted each week, giving mothers and others detailed information on the pictures. Much material has been gathered for the broadcasts and for meetings of the Committee, Mrs. Thornley says. It is planned to build up a feeling for family pictures in the neighborhood theatres during the weekends. This favored plan once again emphasized.

WE have found that when the Chamber of Commerce executives of a community are enlisted to support a local better films activity that they always render helpful support and advice. A recent example of this is an editorial in the Sanford (Fla.) Herald growing out of a chat with the Chamber of Commerce secretary. Speaking of the fine theatres in Sanford the editorial then makes this general statement regarding the place of the motion picture theatre in the community: "The average citizen does not realize what an important factor is represented in its theatre and amusement enterprise. The local theatre operates on a heavy payroll. Eighty per cent of its money stays at home. A smaller proportion of the gross proceeds is sent away for film rental than the average business enterprise spends for the stock of merchandise it has on sale. When a clothier sells you a suit, it is a garment he has bought from a manufacturer somewhere else. If you buy that garment from a local merchant, his margin of profit between the cost to him and the selling price to you is spent in rent or taxes, insurance, labor, advertising, light and heat, interest on capital with which to operate and his participation in the many community enterprises to which he is expected to contribute. The local theatre has the same margin between the cost of film rental and all other expenses. . . . The intelligent citizen realizes that we need the theatre in the amusement life of the community. It furnishes relaxation, recreation and amusement. . . . Mental relaxation is as important as physical recreation. We can have only the best theatres as we give them our support."

SELECTED PICTURES GUIDE

This department lists pictures selected by the Review Committee of the National Board of Review as worthy of popular patronage in the theatres, with an indication of the audience group suitability for each picture. The choice of the pictures included is based upon principles of selection developed through long study of public preference as to what constitutes good screen entertainment. The consensus of the Review Committee forms the basis for the reviews and audience recommendations of the pictures.

EDITOR

JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON

DEPARTMENT STAFF

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THE REVIEW COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 250 TRAINED MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE OF WIDELY VARIOUS INTERESTS WHO VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES.

Key to Audience Suitability

Family audience. Pictures recommended for the family audience (12 years up).

Mature audience. Pictures recommended for the adult audience (18 years up).

Junior matinee. Pictures suitable for special showings to children under twelve.

*—Pictures especially worth seeing as above the average "selected" picture.

CALL HER SAVAGE—From the novel by Tiffany Thayer, directed by John Francis Dillon, with a cast headed by Clara Bow. Fox, 7 reels. A highly improbable story of the causes and effects of a girl's tempestuous nature, with considerable exhibition of "it." More interesting to Clara Bow fans than to lovers of the cinema art, and for such fans the film is selected. *Mature audience.*

CENTRAL PARK—Screen story by Ward Morehouse and Earl Baldwin, directed by John G. Adolfi, with a cast including Joan Blondell and Wallace Ford. First National, 6 reels. Adventures of an unemployed couple in Central Park, which includes perils from gangsters, an escaped lion and an escaped lunatic. Lively and fairly entertaining. *Family audience.*

***THE CONQUERORS**—From the story by Howard Estabrook, directed by William A. Wellman, with a cast including Ann Harding, Richard Dix and Edna May Oliver. RKO-Radio, 9 reels. A panorama of certain aspects of American life since 1873, in which the stars grow from youthful lovers to grandparents. In episodic form, without much plot, it shows several national panics and how the country always came out of them stronger and more prosperous than ever. Good propaganda for optimism, with excellent directorial touches. Suggested for schools and libraries. *Family audience.*

CYNARA—From the stage play by H. M. Harroud and R. Gore Brown, directed by King Vidor, with a cast including Ronald Colman and Kay Francis. United Artists, 7 reels. The question of can a man love two women at the same time and how do the women concerned feel about it. A man is temporarily lured from a nice wife by a nice shop girl. Delicately and tastefully done with pleasant actors. *Mature audience.*

DECEPTION—Screen story by Nat Pendleton, directed by Louis Seiler, with a cast including Leo Carrillo and Nat Pendleton. Columbia, 7 reels. An entertaining film for devotees of wrestling since there are many fine scenes of this sport in the picture which concerns a young football star who succeeds in wiping out a crooked wrestling promoter who hired and framed him. *Family audience.*

EVENINGS FOR SALE—From a story by I. A. R. Wylie, directed by Stuart Walker, with a cast including Herbert Marshall, Sari Maritza and Charles Ruggles. Paramount, 7 reels. An entertaining story of a Count who, reduced to poverty, is forced to become a gigolo. He becomes involved with a wealthy American woman who does not realize how he makes his living. Finally she awakens to the fact that her place is back home in a little American town and the Count is free to marry the girl he loves. *Family audience.*

GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY—Screen story by Frances Hyland, directed by Albert Ray, with a cast including Betty Compson and Tom Douglas. Monogram, 6 reels. A well-acted and absorbing story of the friendship between two women, started in prison. One, a hardened crook, secures the release, in a strange way, of the other, a young pianist who is innocent of the murder for which she was convicted. *Mature audience.*

THE HALF NAKED TRUTH—Screen story by Ben Markson and H. M. Swanson, directed by Gregory La Cava, with a cast including Lupe Velez and Lee Tracy. RKO-Radio, 8 reels. An amusing comedy about a publicity man and his tactics of putting across publicity stunts. *Family audience.*

HE LEARNED ABOUT WOMEN—Screen story and direction by Lloyd Corrigan, with a cast including Alison Skipworth and Stuart Erwin. Paramount, 7 reels. Highly amusing comedy about a young bookworm who is left many millions and goes out to learn about life. The acting of both the principals is excellent. *Family audience.*

MAN AGAINST WOMAN—Screen story by Keene Thompson, directed by Irving Cummings, with a cast headed by Jack Holt and Lillian Miles. Columbia, 7 reels. Determined

to get his man and marry the girl he loves, gets a police officer into difficulties. Only his bravery and stubborn determination win for him the respect of the force and he attains his goal. *Mature audience.*

THE MASK OF FU MANCHU—From the novel by Sax Rohmer, directed by Charles Brabin, with a cast headed by Boris Karloff. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 7 reels. A horror story in which the English authorities and Fu Manchu are trying to get possession of a mask and sabre which are in the tomb of a Chinese ruler. *Mature audience.*

***THE MATCH KING**—From the novel by Einar Thorvaldson, directed by Harry Bretherton, with a cast headed by Warren William. First National, 7 reels. A film based presumably on the rise to power of Ivar Kreuger and his debacle following the discovery of the forged Italian bonds—intensely interesting and to some extent of social value. *Family audience.*

ME AND MY GAL—Screen story by Barry Connors and Philip Klein, directed by Raoul Walsh, with a cast including Spencer Tracy and Joan Bennett. Fox, 7 reels. Comedy melodrama about a girl cashier in a lunchroom and a detective—the melodrama involving the capture of bank robbers. The comedy is broad and often rough but full of laughs. Spencer Tracy in one of his best roughneck characterizations. *Family audience.*

MEN OF AMERICA—From the story by Humphrey Pearson, directed by Ralph Ince, with a cast including Chic Sales, Bill Boyd and Ralph Ince. RKO-Radio, 7 reels. Interesting outdoor picture, full of action and good characterizations, in which old-time and present-day Westerners unite against an escaping band of gangsters as they used to unite against marauding Indians. There is an unusual note of pioneer Americanism, brought up-to-date, in the film. *Family audience.*

THE MONKEY'S PAW—From the story by William W. Jacobs, directed by Wesley Ruggles, with a cast including C. Aubrey Smith, Ivan Simpson and Louise Carter. RKO-Radio, 6 reels. A well-produced and interesting thriller telling of the horrible consequences which follow a man's gaining possession of a magical Indian monkey's paw. *Mature audience.*

NO MORE ORCHIDS—From the novel by Grace Perkins, directed by Walter Lang, with a cast including Carole Lombard and Walter Connolly. Columbia, 7 reels. Story of a much pampered wealthy girl who refuses to marry the prince her grandfather has selected for her preferring a poor man with whom she has fallen in love. Only to save her father from ruin does she consent to her grandfather's demand but her father sacrifices everything to make her happy. *Family audience.*

THE PENGUIN POOL MURDER—From the novel by Stuart Palmer, directed by George Archainbaud, with a cast including Edna May Oliver and James Gleason. RKO-Radio, 7 reels. A highly amusing mystery comedy ex-

cellently acted by James Gleason as the detective and Edna May Oliver as the school teacher who helps him solve the mystery. *Family audience.*

PROSPERITY—Screen story by Sylvia Thalberg and Frank Butler, directed by Sam Woods, with a cast headed by Marie Dressler. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 9 reels. Marie Dressler as the mother of a bank president in a small town gives a highly entertaining performance of her sacrifices and courage during the depression. Miss Dressler's acting is as superb as usual. *Family audience.*

RENEGADES OF THE WEST—Screen story by Frank R. Pierce, directed by Casey Robinson, with a cast headed by Tom Keene. RKO-Radio, 6 reels. Western romance in which the hero goes to jail in order to become friendly with one of the gang who murdered his father and thus bring all the criminals to justice. The picture has good riding and portrays the West of 1880 fairly accurately. *Family audience. Junior matinee.*

ROCKABYE—From the stage play by Jane Murnin, directed by George Cukor, with a cast including Constance Bennett, Paul Lukas and Joel McCrea. RKO-Radio, 8 reels. The story of an actress who gives up the man she loves. It contains almost everything from a sweet baby to a bibulous, comic mother—sentiment, sentimentality, slapstick and two heroes. *Mature audience.*

SECRETS OF THE FRENCH POLICE—From the American Weekly series by H. Ashton Wolf, directed by Edward Sutherland, with a cast including Gwili Andre and Frank Morgan. RKO-Radio, 6 reels. An interesting story about a young flower who is kidnaped, hypnotized and held as the Princess Anastasia of Russia. The French police engage the services of a young thief, her sweetheart, to aid them. *Mature audience.*

***SHERLOCK HOLMES**—Story based on Conan Doyle characters by Bertram Millhauser, directed by William K. Howard, with a cast headed by Clive Brook. Fox, 7 reels. The old characters, Holmes and Moriarty, in an American written story more modern, more humorous than Conan Doyle's plots, and fully as exciting. Clive Brook's style is admirably suited to the part of the great detective. Unusually good melodrama of its type. *Family audience.*

***SILVER DOLLAR**—From the novel by David Karsner, directed by Alfred E. Green, with a cast headed by Edward G. Robinson. First National, 8 reels. An interesting portrayal of the great silver dollar advocate, Yates Martin. In 1876 Martin is a struggling miner but in a few years he gains untold wealth mining silver, and with it comes popularity and power until he is finally broken by the depreciation of the silver dollar and the introduction of the gold standard. Robinson does a remarkable piece of acting as the lovable and pompous little man. In all respects the production is faithful to the period it depicts. *Family audience.*

THE SPEED DEMON—Screen story by Charles Gordon, directed by D. Ross Lederman, with a cast including William Collier, Jr., and Joan Marsh. Columbia, 7 reels. A story of speed-bout racing. Unable to make good in his first race, a youth becomes entangled in a rum-running gang. His adoption of a small boy and his chance to make good in a race win for him popularity and the love of a girl. The racing which is thrilling and the acting of the small boy make the picture good for youngsters. Family audience. Junior matinee.

STURME DER LEIDENSCHAFT (Tempest)—Screen story by Robert Leibmann and Hans Müller, directed by Robert Siodmak, with a cast headed by Emil Jannings. Protex, 8 reels. A mature convincing study of a good-natured man and a perfidious woman, slow-paced but dramatic, with unusual psychological depth. It follows a familiar Jannings' formula in outline, less sensationally but not less powerfully than *Variety* and *The Blue Angel*. Very well directed and acted. Mature audience.

TESS OF THE STORM COUNTRY—From the novel by Grace Miller White, directed by Alfred Santell, with a cast including Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell. Fox, 7 reels. A well-directed picture with the ever-popular Gaynor-Farrell combination. The story concerns the trials and tribulations of a squatter and his daughter interwoven with a romance between the daughter and a rich young man. The contribution of "Peppey" (the monkey) to the entertainment value of the film deserves commendation. Mature audience.

TOO BUSY TO WORK—From the story "Jubilo" by Ben Ames Williams, directed by John Blystone, with a cast headed by Will Rogers. Fox, 7 reels. A delightful comedy drama of a hobo who seeks revenge on the man who stole his wife, but the sight of his daughter softens him and stopping long enough to help the man he came to injure, he takes to the open road again. Family audience.

TRAILING THE KILLER—From the story by Jackson Richards, directed by Herman C. Raymond, with cast headed by Caesar the wolf dog. World Wide, 7 reels. An animal story—accused of killing sheep and even his master, a beautiful dog is hunted by everyone. All through the film the dog performs heroic deeds and it is finally proven to everyone's satisfaction that the real killer is a puma. There is a thrilling fight between a rattlesnake and the dog. Family audience. Junior matinee.

UNDER-COVER MAN—From the story by John Wilstach, directed by James Flood, with a cast including George Raft and Nancy Carroll. Paramount, 8 reels. A boy's father and a girl's brother are both killed by bond thieves. The police are baffled but the boy as an under-cover man and with the aid of the girl capture the criminals. How they plan and carry out the exposure of the crooks is interestingly told. Mature audience.

WILD HORSE MESA—From the novel by Zane Grey, directed by Henry Hathaway, with a cast headed by Randolph Scott. Paramount,

7 reels. An entertaining film for those who like Westerns; with wild horses stampeding, good riding, beautiful photography and the usual love interest. Family audience. Junior matinee.

***WITH WILLIAMSON BENEATH THE SEA**—Produced and directed by J. E. Williamson. Principal, 6 reels. A pictorial record of an expedition to get specimens for the Field Museum, to which is added a thrilling episode of divers exploring wrecked ships. Entertaining and instructive, with an accompanying talk that has both dignity and humanness. Suggested for schools and libraries. Family audience. Junior matinee.

YOU SAID A MOUTHFUL—Screen story by W. B. Dover, directed by Lloyd Bacon, with a cast headed by Joe E. Brown. First National, 6 reels. A fantastic comedy of the hero who, mistaken for a champion swimmer, ludicrously wins a race from Catalina Island to the mainland, and a bride in the bargain. Family audience. Junior matinee.

EXCEPTIONAL PHOTOPLAYS

If I Had a Million—9 rls.

Family audience. (see page 9)

Kameradschaft—7 rls.

Mature audience. (see page 8)

SHORT SUBJECTS

SCENICS, SPORTS AND TRAVELOGUES—1 reel each

*BLOCKS AND TACKLES (Sport Champions Series)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Family audience. Junior matinee.

CATCH 'EM YOUNG (Sports-Eye-View Series)—Paramount. Family audience. Junior matinee.

*FOOTBALL FOOTWORK (Sports Champions Series)—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Family audience. Junior matinee.

MEDBURY IN THE PHILIPPINES (Travelaugh Series)—Columbia. Family audience.

OVER THE JUMPS (Sports-Eye-View Series)—Paramount. Family audience. Junior matinee.

PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL NO. 6—Paramount. Family audience.

PATHE REVIEW NO. 1-2—RKO-Rodia. Family audience. Junior matinee.

SCREEN SNAPSHOTS NO. 5—Columbia. Family audience.

SCREEN SOUVENIRS NOS. 6-7—Paramount. Family audience.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS NO. 24—Universal. Family audience.

"TRAFFIC"—IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD (Hodge Podge Series)—Educational. Family audience.

COMEDIES, MUSICALS, SKITS AND SERIALS

THE BRIDE'S BEREAVEMENT OR A SNAKE IN THE GRASS—Charles Roy, Aileen Pringle. RKO-Rodia, 2 rls. Family audience.

BROADWAY GOSSIP—Educational, 1 rl. Family audience.

THE DEVIL HORSE (Serial)—Nos. 1-6—Mascot, 2 rls. each. Family audience. Junior matinee.

A DRUG ON THE MARKET—Tom Howard. Educational, 1 rl. Family audience.

FREE WHEELING—Our Gang. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. Family audience. Junior matinee.

HAWAIIAN FANTASY—Vincent Lopez and orchestra. Paramount, 1 rl. Family audience.

HEY HEY WESTERNER (Technicolor)—Vitaphone, 2 rls. Family audience.

LAD AN' A LAMP—Our Gang. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2 rls. Family audience. Junior matinee.

MICKEY'S RACE—Mickey McGuire and his gang. RKO-Rodia, 2 rls. Family audience. Junior matinee.

THE RINK—Charles Chaplin (one of the old comedies synchronized). RKO-Rodia, 2 rls. Family audience. Junior matinee.

THE RUN AROUND—William Demarest. Vitaphone, 2 rls. Family audience.

THEN CAME THE YAWN—Jack Haley. Vitaphone, 2 rls. Family audience.

TORCHY ROLLS HIS OWN—Ray Croke. Educational, 2 rls. Family audience.

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To bring to the attention of the public the better pictures through the publication of a Photoplay Guide, based upon the selections and audience suitability classifications of the Review Committees of the National Board of Review;

To sponsor Juniors' Matinees, showing pictures particularly suitable for boys and girls, and week-end family programs whenever possible with exhibitors' bookings;

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